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How to Do It (Part One)

Edward Everett Hale

Mayhill G. Shepherd

Juvenile

HOW TO DO IT.

BY

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CONTENTS.

HOW TO DO IT.

CHAPTER I. — Introductory.

HOW WE MET.

THE papers which are here collected enter in some detail into the success and failure of a large number of young people of my acquaintance, who are here named as

Alice Faulconbridge,
Bob Edmeston,
Clara,
Clem Waters,
Edward Holiday,
Ellen Liston,
Emma Fortinbras,
Enoch Putnam, *brother of* Horace,
Esther,
Fanchon,
Fanny, *cousin to* Hatty Fielding,
Florence,
Frank,
George Ferguson (Asaph Ferguson's *brother*),
Hatty Fielding,
Herbert,
Horace Putnam,
Horace Felltham,
Jane Smith,
Jo Gresham,
Justin,
Laura Walter,
Maud Ingletree,
Oliver Ferguson, *brother to* Asaph *and* George,
Pauline,
Rachel,
Robert,
Sarah Clavers,
Stephen,
Sybil,
Theodora,
Tom Rising,
Walter,
William Hackmatack,
William Withers.

It may be observed that there are thirty-four of them. They make up a very nice set, or would do so if they belonged together. But, in truth, they live in many regions, not to say countries. None of them are too bright or too stupid, only one of them is really selfish, all but one or two are thoroughly sorry for their faults when they commit them, and all of them who are good for anything think of themselves very little. There are a few who are approved members of the Harry Wadsworth Club. That means that they "look up and not down," they "look forward and not back," they "look out and not in," and they "lend a hand." These papers were first published, much as they are now collected, in the magazine "Our Young Folks," and in that admirable weekly paper "The Youth's Companion," which is held in grateful remembrance by a generation now tottering off the stage, and welcomed, as I see, with equal interest by the grandchildren as they totter on. From time to time, therefore, as the different series have gone on, I have received pleasant notes from other

young people, whose acquaintance I have thus made with real pleasure, who have asked more explanation as to the points involved. I have thus been told that my friend, Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, is not governed by all my rules for young people's composition, and that Miss Throckmorton, the governess, does not believe Archbishop Whately is infallible. I have once and again been asked how I made the acquaintance of such a nice set of children. And I can well believe that many of my young correspondents would in that matter be glad to be as fortunate as I.

Perhaps, then, I shall do something to make the little book more intelligible, and to connect its parts, if in this introduction I tell of the one occasion when the *dramatis personæ* met each other; and in order to that, if I tell how they all met me.

First of all, then, my dear young friends, I began active life, as soon as I had left college, as I can well wish all of you might do. I began in keeping school. Not that I want to have any of you do this long, unless an evident fitness or "manifest

destiny" appear so to order. But you may be sure that, for a year or two of the start of life, there is nothing that will teach you your own ignorance so well as having to teach children the few things you know, and to answer, as best you can, their questions on all grounds. There was poor Jane, on the first day of that charming visit at the Penroses, who was betrayed by the simplicity and cordiality of the dinner-table — where she was the youngest of ten or twelve strangers — into taking a protective lead of all the conversation, till at the very last I heard her explaining to dear Mr. Tom Coram himself, — a gentleman who had lived in Java ten years, — that coffee-berries were red when they were ripe. I was sadly mortified for my poor Jane as Tom's eyes twinkled. She would never have got into that rattletrap way of talking if she had kept school for two years. Here, again, is a capital letter from Oliver Ferguson, Asaph's younger brother, describing his life on the Island at Paris all through the siege. I should have sent it yesterday to Mr. Osgood, who would be delighted to

print it in the Atlantic Monthly, but that the spelling is disgraceful. Mr. Osgood and Mr. Howells would think Oliver a fool before they had read down the first page. "L-i-n, lin, n-e-n, nen, linen." Think of that! Oliver would never have spelled "linen" like that if he had been two years a teacher. You can go through four years at Harvard College spelling so, but you cannot go through two years as a schoolmaster.

Well, I say I was fortunate enough to spend two years as an assistant schoolmaster at the old Boston Latin School, — the oldest institution of learning, as we are fond of saying, in the United States. And there first I made my manhood's acquaintance with boys.

"Do you think," said dear Dr. Malone to me one day, "that my son Robert will be too young to enter college next August?" "How old will he be?" said I, and I was told. Then as Robert was at that moment just six months younger than I, who had already graduated, I said wisely, that I thought he would do, and Dr. Malone chuckled, I doubt not, as I did certainly, at the gravity of

my answer. A nice set of boys I had. I had above me two of the most loyal and honorable of gentlemen, who screened me from all reproof for my blunders. My discipline was not of the best, but my purposes were; and I and the boys got along admirably.

It was the old schoolhouse. I believe I shall explain in another place, in this volume, that it stood where Parker's Hotel stands, and my room occupied the spot in space where you, Florence, and you, Theodora, dined with your aunt Dorcas last Wednesday before you took the cars for Andover, — the ladies' dining-room looking on what was then Cooke's Court, and is now Chapman Place. Cooke was Elisha Cooke, who went to England for the charter. So Mr. Saltonstall reminds me. What we call "Province Street" was then "Governor's Alley." For in Province Court, the building now Sargent's Hotel, was for a century, more or less, the official residence of the Governor of Massachusetts. It was the "Province House."

On the top of it, for a weathercock, was the

large mechanical brazen Indian, who, whenever he heard the Old South clock strike twelve, shot off his brazen arrow. The little boys used to hope to see this. But just as twelve came was the bustle of dismissal, and I have never seen one who did see him, though for myself I know he did as was said, and have never questioned it. That opportunity, however, was up stairs, in Mr. Dixwell's room. In my room, in the basement, we had no such opportunity.

The glory of our room was that it was supposed, rightly or not, that a part of it was included in the old schoolhouse which was there before the Revolution. There were old men still living who remembered the troublous times, the times that stirred boys' souls, as the struggle for independence began. I have myself talked with Jonathan Darby Robbins, who was himself one of the committee who waited on the British general to demand that their coasting should not be obstructed. There is a reading piece about it in one of the school-books. This general was not Gage, as he is said to be in the histories, but General Haldimand; and his

quarters were at the house which stood nearly where Franklin's statue stands now, just below King's Chapel. His servant had put ashes on the coast which the boys had made, on the sidewalk which passes the Chapel as you go down School Street. When the boys remonstrated, the servant ridiculed them, — he was not going to mind a gang of rebel boys. So the boys, who were much of their fathers' minds, appointed a committee, of whom my friend was one, to wait on General Haldimand himself. They called on him, and they told him that coasting was one of their inalienable rights and that he must not take it away. The General knew too well that the people of the town must not be irritated to take up his servant's quarrel, and he told the boys that their coast should not be interfered with. So they carried their point. The story-book says that he clasped his hands and said, "Heavens! Liberty is in the very air! Even these boys speak of their rights as do their patriot sires!" But of this Mr. Robbins told me nothing, and as Haldimand was a Hessian, of no great enthusiasm for liberty, I do not, for my part, believe it.

The morning of April 19, 1775, Harrison Gray Otis, then a little boy of eight years old, came down Beacon Street to school, and found a brigade of red-coats in line along Common Street, — as Tremont Street was then called, — so that he could not cross into School Street. They were Earl Percy's brigade. Class in history, where did Percy's brigade go that day, and what became of them before night? A red-coat corporal told the Otis boy to walk along Common Street, and not to try to cross the line. So he did. He went as far as Scollay's Building before he could turn their flank, then he went down to what you call Washington Street, and came up to school, — late. Whether his excuse would have been sufficient I do not know. He was never asked for it. He came into school just in time to hear old Lovel, the Tory schoolmaster, say, "War 's begun and school 's done. *Dimittite libros*," — which means, "Put away your books." They put them away, and had a vacation of a year and nine months thereafter, before the school was open again.

Well, in this old school I had spent four years

of my boyhood, and here, as I say, my manhood's acquaintance with boys began. I taught them Latin, and sometimes mathematics. Some of them will remember a famous Latin poem we wrote about Pocahontas and John Smith. All of them will remember how they capped Latin verses against the master, twenty against one, and put him down. These boys used to cluster round my table at recess and talk. Danforth Newcomb, a lovely, gentle, accurate boy, almost always at the head of his class, — he died young. Shang-hae, San Francisco, Berlin, Paris, Australia, — I don't know what cities, towns, and countries have the rest of them. And when they carry home this book for their own boys to read, they will find some of their boy-stories here.

Then there was Mrs. Merriam's boarding-school. If you will read the chapter on travelling you will find about one of the vacations of her girls. Mrs. Merriam was one of Mr. Ingham's old friends, — and he is a man with whom I have had a great deal to do. Mrs. Merriam opened a school for twelve girls. I knew her very well, and so it

came that I knew her ways with them. Though it was a boarding-school, still the girls had just as "good a time" as they had at home, and when I found that some of them asked leave to spend vacation with her I knew they had better times. I remember perfectly the day when Mrs. Phillips asked them down to the old mansion-house, which seems so like home to me, to eat peaches. And it was determined that the girls should not think they were under any "company" restraint, so no person but themselves was present when the peaches were served, and every girl ate as many as for herself she determined best. When they all rode horseback, Mrs. Merriam and I used to ride together with these young folks behind or before, as it listed them. So, not unnaturally, being a friend of the family, I came to know a good many of them very well.

For another set of them — you may choose the names to please yourselves — the history of my relationship goes back to the Sunday school of the Church of the Unity in Worcester. The first time I ever preached in that church, namely, May 3,

1846, there was but one person in it who had gray hair. All of us of that day have enough now. But we were a set of young people, starting on a new church, which had, I assure you, no dust in the pulpit-cushions. And almost all the children were young, as you may suppose. The first meeting of the Sunday school showed, I think, thirty-six children, and more of them were under nine than over. They are all twenty-five years older now than they were then. Well, we started without a library for the Sunday school. But in a corner of my study Jo Matthews and I put up some three-cornered shelves, on which I kept about a hundred books such as children like, and young people who are no longer children; and then, as I sat reading, writing, or stood fussing over my fuchsias or labelling the mineralogical specimens, there would come in one or another nice girl or boy, to borrow a "Rollo" or a "Franconia," or to see if Ellen Liston had returned "Amy Herbert." And so we got very good chances to find each other out. It is not a bad plan for a young minister, if he really want to know what the young

folk of his parish are. I know it was then and there that I conceived the plan of writing "Margaret Percival in America" as a sequel to Miss Sewell's "Margaret Percival," and that I wrote my half of that history.

The Worcester Sunday school grew beyond thirty-six scholars; and I have since had to do with two other Sunday schools, where, though the children did not know it, I felt as young as the youngest of them all. And in that sort of life you get chances to come at nice boys and nice girls which most people in the world do not have.

And the last of all the congresses of young people which I will name, where I have found my favorites, shall be the vacation congresses, — when people from all the corners of the world meet at some country hotel, and wonder who the others are the first night, and, after a month, wonder again how they ever lived without knowing each other as brothers and sisters. I never had a nicer time than that day when we celebrated Arthur's birthday by going up to Greely's Pond.

"Could Amelia walk so far? She only eight years old, and it was the whole of five miles by a wood-road, and five miles to come back again." Yes, Amelia was certain she could. Then, "whether Arthur could walk so far, he being nine." Why, of course he could if Amelia could. So eight-year-old, nine-year-old, ten-year-old, eleven-year-old, and all the rest of the ages, — we tramped off together, and we stumbled over the stumps, and waded through the mud, and tripped lightly, like Somnambula in the opera, over the log bridges, which were single logs and nothing more, and came successfully to Greely's Pond, — beautiful lake of Egeria that it is, hidden from envious and lazy men by forest and rock and mountain. And the children of fifty years old and less pulled off shoes and stockings to wade in it; and we caught in tin mugs little seedling trouts not so long as that word "seedling" is on the page, and saw them swim in the mugs and set them free again; and we ate the lunches with appetites as of Arcadia; and we stumped happily home again, and found, as we went home, all the sketch-books and

bait-boxes and neckties which we had lost as we went up. On a day like that you get intimate, if you were not intimate before.

O dear! don't you wish you were at Waterville now?

Now, if you please, my dear Fanchon, we will not go any further into the places where I got acquainted with the heroes and heroines of this book. Allow, of those mentioned here, four to the Latin school, five to the Unity Sunday school, six to the South Congregational, seven to vacation acquaintance, credit me with nine children of my own and ten brothers and sisters, and you will find no difficulty in selecting who of these are which of those, if you have ever studied the science of "Indeterminate Analysis" in Professor Smythe's Algebra.

"Dear Mr. Hale, you are making fun of us. We never know when you are in earnest."

Do not be in the least afraid, dear Florence. Remember that a central rule for comfort in life is this, "Nobody was ever written down an ass, except by himself."

Now I will tell you how and when the particular thirty-four names above happened to come together.

We were, a few of us, staying at the White Mountains. I think no New England summer is quite perfect unless you stay at least a day in the White Mountains. "Staying in the White Mountains" does not mean climbing on top of a stage-coach at Centre Harbor, and riding by day and by night for forty-eight hours till you fling yourself into a railroad-car at Littleton, and cry out that "you have done them." No. It means just living with a prospect before your eye of a hundred miles' radius, as you may have at Bethlehem or the Flume; or, perhaps, a valley and a set of hills, which never by accident look twice the same, as you may have at the Glen House or Dolly Cop's or at Waterville; or with a gorge behind the house, which you may thread and thread and thread day in and out, and still not come out upon the cleft rock from which flows the first drop of the lovely stream, as you may do at Jackson. It means living front to front, lip to lip,

with Nature at her loveliest, Echo at her most mysterious, with Heaven at its brightest and Earth at its greenest, and, all this time, breathing, with every breath, an atmosphere which is the elixir of life, so pure and sweet and strong. At Greely's you are, I believe, on the highest land inhabited in America. That land has a pure air upon it. Well, as I say, we were staying in the White Mountains. Of course the young folks wanted to go up Mount Washington. We had all been up Osceola and Black Mountain, and some of us had gone up on Mount Carter, and one or two had been on Mount Lafayette. But this was as nothing till we had stood on Mount Washington himself. So I told Hatty Fielding and Laura to go on to the railroad-station and join a party we knew that were going up from there, while Jo Gresham and Stephen and the two Fergusons and I would go up on foot by a route I knew from Randolph over the real Mount Adams. Nobody had been up that particular branch of Israel's run since Channing and I did in 1841. Will Hackmatack, who was with us, had a blister on his

foot, so he went with the riding party. He said that was the reason, perhaps he thought so. The truth was he wanted to go with Laura, and nobody need be ashamed of that any day.

I spare you the account of Israel's river, and of the lovely little cascade at its very source, where it leaps out between two rocks. I spare you the hour when we lay under the spruces while it rained, and the little birds, ignorant of men and boys, hopped tamely round us. I spare you even the rainbow, more than a semicircle, which we saw from Mount Adams. Safely, wetly, and hungry, we five arrived at the Tiptop House about six, amid the congratulations of those who had ridden. The two girls and Will had come safely up by the cars, — and who do you think had got in at the last moment when the train started but Pauline and her father, who had made a party up from Portland and had with them Ellen Liston and Sarah Clavers. And who do you think had appeared in the Glen House party, when they came, but Esther and her mother and Edward Holiday and his father. Up to this moment of

their lives some of these young people had never seen other some. But some had, and we had not long been standing on the rocks making out Sebago and the water beyond Portland before they were all very well acquainted. All fourteen of us went in to supper, and were just beginning on the goat's milk, when a cry was heard that a party of young men in uniform were approaching from the head of Tuckerman's Ravine. Jo and Oliver ran out, and in a moment returned to wrench us all from our corn-cakes that we might welcome the New Limerick boat-club, who were on a pedestrian trip and had come up the Parkman Notch that day. Nice, brave fellows they were, — a little foot-sore. Who should be among them but Tom himself and Bob Edmeston. They all went and washed, and then with some difficulty we all got through tea, when the night party from the Notch House was announced on horseback, and we sallied forth to welcome them. Nineteen in all, from all nations. Two Japanese princes, and the Secretary of the Dutch legation, and so on, as usual; but what was not as usual, jolly Mr.

Waters and his jollier wife were there, — she astride on her saddle, as is the sensible fashion of the Notch House, — and, in the long stretching line, we made out Clara Waters and Clem, not together, but Clara with a girl whom she did not know, but who rode better than she, and had whipped both horses with a rattan she had. And who should this girl be but Sybil Dyer!

As the party filed up, and we lifted tired girls and laughing mothers off the patient horses, I found that a lucky chance had thrown Maud and her brother Stephen into the same caravan. There was great kissing when my girls recognized Maud, and when it became generally known that I was competent to introduce to others such pretty and bright people as she and Laura and Sarah Clavers were, I found myself very popular, of a sudden, and in quite general demand.

And I bore my honors meekly, I assure you. I took nice old Mrs. Van Astrachan out to a favorite rock of mine to see the sunset, and, what

was more marvellous, the heavy thunder-cloud, which was beating up against the wind; and I left the young folks to themselves, only aspiring to be a Youth's Companion. I got Will to bring me Mrs. Van Astrachan's black furs, as it grew cold, but at last the air was so sharp and the storm clearly so near, that we were all driven in to that nice, cosey parlor at the Tiptop House, and sat round the hot stove, not sorry to be sheltered, indeed, when we heard the heavy rain on the windows.

We fell to telling stories, and I was telling of the last time I was there, when, by great good luck, Starr King turned up, having come over Madison afoot, when I noticed that Hall, one of those patient giants who kept the house, was called out, and, in a moment more, that he returned and whispered his partner out. In a minute more they returned for their rubber capes, and then we learned that a man had staggered into the stable half frozen and terribly frightened, announcing that he had left some people lost just by the Lake of the Clouds. Of course, we were all im-

mensely excited for half an hour or less, when Hall appeared with a very wet woman, all but senseless, on his shoulder, with her hair hanging down to the ground. The ladies took her into an inner room, stripped off her wet clothes, and rubbed her dry and warm, gave her a little brandy, and dressed her in the dry linens Mrs. Hall kept ready. Who should she prove to be, of all the world, but Emma Fortinbras! The men of the party were her father and her brothers Frank and Robert.

No! that is not all. After the excitement was over they joined us in our circle round the stove, — and we should all have been in bed, but that Mr. Hall told such wonderful bear-stories, and it was after ten o'clock that we were still sitting there. The shower had quite blown over, when a cheery French horn was heard, and the cheery Hall, who was never surprised, I believe, rushed out again, and I need not say Oliver rushed out with him and Jo Gresham, and before long we all rushed out to welcome the last party of the day.

These were horseback people, who had come by perhaps the most charming route of all, — which is also the oldest of all, — from what was Ethan Crawford's. They did not start till noon. They had taken the storm, wisely, in a charcoal camp, — and there are worse places, — and then they had spurred up, and here they were. Who were they? Why, there was an army officer and his wife, who proved to be Alice Faulconbridge, and with her was Hatty Fielding's Cousin Fanny, and besides them were Will Withers and his sister Florence, who had made a charming quartette party with Walter and his sister Theodora, and on this ride had made acquaintance for the first time with Colonel Mansfield and Alice. All this was wonderful enough to me, as Theodora explained it to me when I lifted her off her horse, but when I found that Horace Putnam and his brother Enoch were in the same train, I said I did believe in astrology.

For though I have not named Jane Smith nor Fanchon, that was because you did not recognize them among the married people in the

Crawford House party, — and I suppose you did not recognize Herbert either. How should you? But, in truth, here we all were up above the clouds on the night of the 25th of August.

Did not those Ethan Crawford people eat as if they had never seen biscuits? And when at last they were done, Stephen, who had been out in the stables, came in with a black boy he found there, who had his fiddle; and as the Colonel Mansfield party came in from the dining-room, Steve screamed out, "Take your partners for a Virginia Reel." No! I do not know whose partner was who; only this, that there were seventeen boys and men and seventeen girls or women, besides me and Mrs. Van Astrachan and Colonel Mansfield and Pauline's mother. And we danced till for one I was almost dead, and then we went to bed, to wake up at five in the morning to see the sunrise.

As we sat on the rocks, on the eastern side, I introduced Stephen to Sybil Dyer, — the last two who had not known each other. And I got talking with a circle of young folks about what the

communion of saints is, — meaning, of course, just such unselfish society as we had there. And so dear Laura said, "Why will you not write us down something of what you are saying, Mr. Hale?" And Jo Gresham said, "Pray do, — pray do; if it were only to tell us

"How to do it."

CHAPTER II.

I WISH the young people who propose to read any of these papers to understand to whom they are addressed. My friend, Frederic Ingham, has a nephew, who went to New York on a visit, and while there occupied himself in buying "travel-presents" for his brothers and sisters at home. His funds ran low; and at last he found that he had still three presents to buy and only thirty-four cents with which to buy them. He made the requisite calculation as to how much he should have for each, — looked in at Ball and Black's, and at Tiffany's, priced an amethyst necklace, which he thought Clara would like, and a set of cameos for Fanfan, and found them beyond his reach. He then tried at a nice little toy-shop there is a little below the Fifth Avenue House, on the west, where a "clever" woman and a good-natured girl keep the shop, and, having there made one or two vain endeavors to suit

himself, asked the good-natured girl if she had not "got anything a fellow could buy for about eleven cents." She found him first one article, then another, and then another. Wat bought them all, and had one cent in his pocket when he came home.

In much the same way these several articles of mine have been waiting in the bottom of my inkstand and the front of my head for seven or nine years, without finding precisely the right audience or circle of readers. I explained to Mr. Fields — the amiable Sheik of the amiable tribe who prepare the "Young Folks" for the young folks — that I had six articles all ready to write, but that they were meant for girls say from thirteen to seventeen, and boys say from fourteen to nineteen. I explained that girls and boys of this age never read the "Atlantic," O no, not by any means! And I supposed that they never read the "Young Folks," O no, not by any means! I explained that I could not preach them as sermons, because many of the children at church were too young, and a few of the grown people were too old. That I was, therefore, detailing

them in conversation to such of my young friends as chose to hear. On which the Sheik was so good as to propose to provide for me, as it were, a special opportunity, which I now use. We jointly explain to the older boys and girls, who rate between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, that these essays are exclusively for them.

I had once the honor — on the day after Lee's surrender — to address the girls of the 12th Street School in New York. "Shall I call you 'girls' or 'young ladies'?" said I. "Call us girls, call us girls," was the unanimous answer. I heard it with great pleasure; for I took it as a nearly certain sign that these three hundred young people were growing up to be true women, — which is to say, ladies of the very highest tone.

"Why did I think so?" Because at the age of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen they took pleasure in calling things by their right names.

So far, then, I trust we understand each other, before any one begins to read these little hints of mine, drawn from forty-five years of very quiet listening to good talkers; which are, however, nothing more than hints

HOW TO TALK.

Here is a letter from my nephew Tom, a spirited, modest boy of seventeen, who is a student of the Scientific School at New Limerick. He is at home with his mother for an eight weeks' vacation; and the very first evening of his return he went round with her to the Vandermeyers', where was a little gathering of some thirty or forty people, — most of them, as he confesses, his old schoolmates, a few of them older than himself. But poor Tom was mortified, and thinks he was disgraced, because he did not have anything to say, could not say it if he had, and, in short, because he does not talk well. He hates talking parties, he says, and never means to go to one again.

Here is also a letter from Esther W., who may speak for herself, and the two may well enough be put upon the same file, and be answered together: —

"Please listen patiently to a confession. I have what seems to me very natural, — a strong

desire to be liked by those whom I meet around me in society of my own age; but, unfortunately, when with them my manners have often been unnatural and constrained, and I have found myself thinking of myself, and what others were thinking of me, instead of entering into the enjoyment of the moment as others did. I seem to have naturally very little independence, and to be very much afraid of other people, and of their opinion. And when, as you might naturally infer from the above, I often have not been successful in gaining the favor of those around me, then I have spent a great deal of time in the selfish indulgence of 'the blues,' and in philosophizing on the why and the wherefore of some persons' agreeableness and popularity and others' unpopularity."

There, is not that a good letter from a nice girl?

Will you please to see, dear Tom, and you also, dear Esther, that both of you, after the fashion of your age, are confounding the method with the thing. You see how charmingly Mrs. Pallas sits

back and goes on with her crochet while Dr. Volta talks to her; and then, at the right moment, she says just the right thing, and makes him laugh, or makes him cry, or makes him defend himself, or makes him explain himself; and you think that there is a particular knack or rule for doing this so glibly, or that she has a particular genius for it which you are not born to, and therefore you both propose hermitages for yourselves because you cannot do as she does. Dear children, it would be a very stupid world if anybody in it did just as anybody else does. There is no particular method about talking or talking well. It is one of the things in life which "does itself." And the only reason why you do not talk as easily and quite as pleasantly as Mrs. Pallas is, that you are thinking of the method, and coming to me to inquire how to do that which ought to do itself perfectly, simply, and without any rules at all.

It is just as foolish girls at school think that there is some particular method of drawing with which they shall succeed, while with all other

methods they have failed. "No, I can't draw in india-ink [pronounced in-jink], 'n' I can't do anything with crayons, — I hate crayons, — 'n' I can't draw pencil-drawings, 'n' I won't try any more; but if this tiresome old Mr. Apelles was not so obstinate, 'n' would only let me try the 'monochromatic drawing,' I know I could do that. 'T so easy. Julia Ann, she drew a beautiful piece in only six lessons."

My poor Pauline, if you cannot see right when you have a crayon in your hand, and will not draw what you see then, no "monochromatic system" is going to help you. But if you will put down on the paper what you see, as you see it, whether you do it with a cat's tail, as Benjamin West did it, or with a glove turned inside out, as Mr. Hunt bids you do it, you will draw well. The method is of no use, unless the thing is there; and when you have the thing, the method will follow.

So there is no particular method for talking which will not also apply to swimming or skating, or reading or dancing, or in general to living.

And if you fail in talking, it is because you have not yet applied in talking the simple master-rules of life.

For instance, the first of these rules is,

TELL THE TRUTH.

Only last night I saw poor Bob Edmeston, who has got to pull through a deal of drift-wood before he gets into clear water, break down completely in the very beginning of his acquaintance with one of the nicest girls I know, because he would not tell the truth, or did not. I was standing right behind them, listening to Dr. Ollapod, who was explaining to me the history of the second land-grant made to Gorges, and between the sentences I had a chance to hear every word poor Bob said to Laura. Mark now, Laura is a nice clever girl, who has come to make the Watsons a visit through her whole vacation at Poughkeepsie; and all the young people are delighted with her pleasant ways, and all of them would be glad to know more of her than they do. Bob really wants to know her, and he was really glad to be introduced

to her. Mrs. Pollexfen presented him to her, and he asked her to dance, and they stood on the side of the cotillon behind me and in front of Dr. Ollapod. After they had taken their places, Bob said: "Jew go to the opera last week, Miss Walter?" He meant, "Did you go to the opera last week?"

"No," said Laura, "I did not."

"O, 't was charming!" said Bob. And there this effort at talk stopped, as it should have done, being founded on nothing but a lie; which is to say, not founded at all. For, in fact, Bob did not care two straws about the opera. He had never been to it but once, and then he was tired before it was over. But he pretended he cared for it. He thought that at an evening party he must talk about the opera, and the lecture season, and the assemblies, and a lot of other trash, about which in fact he cared nothing, and so knew nothing. Not caring and not knowing, he could not carry on his conversation a step. The mere fact that Miss Walter had shown that she was in real sympathy with him in an indifference to the opera

threw him off the track which he never should have been on, and brought his untimely conversation to an end.

Now, as it happened, Laura's next partner brought her to the very same place, or rather she never left it, but Will Hackmatack came and claimed her dance as soon as Bob's was done. Dr. Ollapod had only got down to the appeal made to the lords sitting in equity, when I noticed Will's beginning. He spoke right out of the thing he was thinking of.

"I saw you riding this afternoon," he said.

"Yes," said Laura, "we went out by the red mills, and drove up the hill by Mr. Pond's."

"Did you?" said Will, eagerly. "Did you see the beehives?"

"Beehives? no;—are there beehives?"

"Why, yes, did not you know that Mr. Pond knows more about bees than all the world beside? At least, I believe so. He has a gold medal from Paris for his honey or for something. And his arrangements there are very curious."

"I wish I had known it," said Laura. "I kept

bees last summer, and they always puzzled me. I tried to get books; but the books are all written for Switzerland, or England, or anywhere but Orange County."

"Well," said the eager Will, "I do not think Mr. Pond has written any book, but I really guess he knows a great deal about it. Why, he told me —" &c., &c., &c.

It was hard for Will to keep the run of the dance; and before it was over he had promised to ask Mr. Pond when a party of them might come up to the hill and see the establishment; and he felt as well acquainted with Laura as if he had known her a month. All this ease came from Will's not pretending an interest where he did not feel any, but opening simply where he was sure of his ground, and was really interested. More simply, Will did not tell a lie, as poor Bob had done in that remark about the opera, but told the truth.

If I were permitted to write more than thirty-five pages of this note-paper (of which this is the nineteenth), I would tell you twenty stories to the same point. And please observe that the distinction

between the two systems of talk is the eternal distinction between the people whom Thackeray calls snobs and the people who are gentlemen and ladies. Gentlemen and ladies are sure of their ground. They pretend to nothing that they are not. They have no occasion to act one or another part. It is not possible for them, even in the *choice of subjects*, to tell lies.

The principle of selecting a subject which thoroughly interests you requires only one qualification. You may be very intensely interested in some affairs of your own; but in general society you have no right to talk of them, simply because they are not of equal interest to other people. Of course you may come to me for advice, or go to your master, or to your father or mother, or to any friend, and in form lay open your own troubles or your own life, and make these the subject of your talk. But in general society you have no right to do this. For the rule of life is, that men and women must not think of themselves, but of others: they must live for others, and then they will live rightly for themselves. So the second rule for talk would express itself thus: —

Do not talk about your own Affairs.

I remember how I was mortified last summer, up at the Tiptop House, though I was not in the least to blame, by a display Emma Fortinbras made of herself. There had gathered round the fire in the sitting-room quite a group of the different parties who had come up from the different houses, and we all felt warm and comfortable and social; and, to my real delight, Emma and her father and her cousin came in, — they had been belated somewhere. She is a sweet pretty little thing, really the belle of the village, if we had such things, and we are all quite proud of her in one way; but I am sorry to say that she is a little goose, and sometimes she manages to show this just when you don't want her to. Of course she shows this, as all other geese show themselves, by cackling about things that interest no one but herself. When she came into the room, Alice ran to her and kissed her, and took her to the warmest seat, and took her little cold hands to rub them, and began to ask her how it had all happened, and

where they had been, and all the other questions. Now, you see, this was a very dangerous position. Poor Emma was not equal to it. The subject was given her, and so far she was not to blame. But when, from the misfortunes of the party, she rushed immediately to detail individual misfortunes of her own, resting principally on the history of a pair of boots which she had thought would be strong enough to last all through the expedition, and which she had meant to send to Sparhawk's before she left home to have their heels cut down, only she had forgotten, and now these boots were thus and thus, and so and so, and *she* had no others with her, and *she* was sure that *she* did not know what *she* should do when *she* got up in the morning, — I say, when she got as far as this, in all this thrusting upon people who wanted to sympathize a set of matters which had no connection with what interested them, excepting so far as their personal interest in her gave it, she violated the central rule of life; for she showed she was thinking of herself with more interest than she thought of others with. Now to do this is

bad living, and it is bad living which will show itself in bad talking.

But I hope you see the distinction. If Mr. Agassiz comes to you on the Field day of the Essex Society, and says: "Miss Fanchon, I understand that you fell over from the steamer as you came from Portland, and had to swim half an hour before the boats reached you. Will you be kind enough to tell me how you were taught to swim, and how the chill of the water affected you, and, in short, all about your experience?" he then makes choice of the subject. He asks for all the detail. It is to gratify him that you go into the detail, and you may therefore go into it just as far as you choose. Only take care not to lug in one little detail merely because it interests you, when there is no possibility that, in itself, it can have an interest for him.

Have you never noticed how the really provoking silence of these brave men who come back from the war gives a new and particular zest to what they tell us of their adventures? We have to worm it out of them, we drag it from them by

pincers, and, when we have it, the flavor is all pure. It is exactly what we want, — life highly condensed; and they could have given us indeed nothing more precious, as certainly nothing more charming. But when some Bobadil braggart volunteers to tell how *he* did this and that, how *he* silenced this battery, and how *he* rode over that field of carnage, in the first place we do not believe a tenth part of his story, and in the second place we wish he would not tell the fraction which we suppose is possibly true.

Life is given to us that we may learn how to live. That is what it is for. We are here in a great boarding-school, where we are being trained in the use of our bodies and our minds, so that in another world we may know how to use other bodies and minds with other faculties. Or, if you please, life is a gymnasium. Take which figure you choose. Because of this, good talk, following the principle of life, is always directed with a general desire for learning rather than teaching. No good talker is obtrusive, thrusting forward his observation on men and things. He is rather recep-

tive, trying to get at other people's observations; and what he says himself falls from him, as it were, by accident, he unconscious that he is saying anything that is worth while. As the late Professor Harris said, one of the last times I saw him, "There are unsounded depths in a man's nature of which he himself knows nothing till they are revealed to him by the plash and ripple of his own conversation with other men." This great principle of life, when applied in conversation, may be stated simply then in two words, —

CONFESS IGNORANCE.

You are both so young that you cannot yet conceive of the amount of treasure that will yet be poured in upon you, by all sorts of people, if you do not go about professing that you have all you want already. You know the story of the two school-girls on the Central Railroad. They were dead faint with hunger, having ridden all day without food, but, on consulting together, agreed that they did not dare to get out at any station to buy. A modest old doctor of divinity,

who was coming home from a meeting of the "American Board," overheard their talk, got some sponge-cake, and pleasantly and civilly offered it to them as he might have done to his grandchildren. But poor Sybil, who was nervous and anxious, said, "No, thank you," and so Sarah thought she must say, "No, thank you," too; and so they were nearly dead when they reached the Delavan House. Now just that same thing happens whenever you pretend, either from pride or from shyness, that you know the thing you do not know. If you go on in that way you will be starved before long, and the coroner's jury will bring in a verdict, "Served you right." I could have brayed a girl, whom I will call Jane Smith, last night at Mrs. Pollexfen's party, only I remembered, "Though thou bray a fool in a mortar, his foolishness will not depart from him," and that much the same may be said of fools of the other sex. I could have brayed her, I say, when I saw how she was constantly defrauding herself by cutting off that fine Major Andrew, who was talking to her, or trying to. Really, no instances give you

any idea of it. From a silly boarding-school habit, I think, she kept saying "Yes," as if she would be disgraced by acknowledging ignorance. "You know," said he, "what General Taylor said to Santa Anna, when they brought him in?" "Yes," simpered poor Jane, though in fact she did not know, and I do not suppose five people in the world do. But poor Andrew, simple as a soldier, believed her and did not tell the story, but went on alluding to it, and they got at once into helpless confusion. Still, he did not know what the matter was, and before long, when they were speaking of one of the Muhlbach novels, he said, "Did you think of the resemblance between the winding up and Redgauntlet?" "O yes," simpered poor Jane again, though, as it proved, and as she had to explain in two or three minutes, she had never read a word of Redgauntlet. She had merely said "Yes," and "Yes," and "Yes" not with a distinct notion of fraud, but from an impression that it helps conversation on if you forever assent to what is said. This is an utter mistake; for, as I hope you see by this time, con-

versation really depends on the acknowledgment of ignorance, — being, indeed, the providential appointment of God for the easy removal of such ignorance.

And here I must stop, lest you both be tired. In my next paper I shall begin again, and teach you, 4. To talk to the person you are talking with, and not simper to her or him, while really you are looking all round the room, and thinking of ten other persons; 5. Never in any other way to underrate the person you talk with, but to talk your best, whatever that may be; and, 6. To be brief, — a point which I shall have to illustrate at great length.

If you like, you may confide to the Letter-Box your experiences on these points, as well as on the three on which we have already been engaged. But, whether you do or do not, I shall give to you the result, not only of my experiences, but of at least 5,872 years of talk — Lyell says many more — since Adam gave names to chattering monkeys.

CHAPTER III.

TALK.

MAY I presume that all my young friends between this and Seattle have read paper Number Two? First class in geography, where is Seattle? Right. Go up. Have you all read, and inwardly considered, the three rules, "Tell the truth"; "Talk not of yourself"; and "Confess ignorance"? Have you all practised them, in moonlight sleigh-ride by the Red River of the North, — in moonlight stroll on the beach by St. Augustine, — in evening party at Pottsville, — and at the parish sociable in Northfield? Then you are sure of the benefits which will crown your lives if you obey these three precepts; and you will, with unfaltering step, move quickly over the kettle-de-benders of this broken essay, and from the thistle, danger, will pluck the three more flowers which I have promised. I am to teach you, fourth, —

To talk to the Person who is talking to you.

This rule is constantly violated by fools and snobs. Now you might as well turn your head away when you shoot at a bird, or look over your shoulder when you have opened a new book, — instead of looking at the bird, or looking at the book, — as lapse into any of the habits of a man who pretends to talk to one person while he is listening to another, or watching another, or wondering about another. If you really want to hear what Jo Gresham is saying to Alice Faulconbridge, when they are standing next you in the dance, say so to Will Withers, who is trying to talk with you. You can say pleasantly, "Mr. Withers, I want very much to overhear what Mr. Gresham is saying, and if you will keep still a minute, I think I can." Then Will Withers will know what to do. You will not be preoccupied, and perhaps you may be able to hear something you were not meant to know.

At this you are disgusted. You throw down the book at once, and say you will not read

any more. You cannot think why this hateful man supposes that you would do anything so mean.

Then why do you let Will Withers suppose so? All he can tell is what you show him. If you will listen while he speaks, so as to answer intelligently, and will then speak to him as if there were no other persons in the room, he will know fast enough that you are talking to him. But if you just say "yes," and "no," and "indeed," and "certainly," in that flabby, languid way in which some boys and girls I know pretend to talk sometimes, he will think that you are engaged in thinking of somebody else, or something else, — unless, indeed, he supposes that you are not thinking of anything, and that you hardly know what thinking is.

It is just as bad, when you are talking to another girl, or another girl's mother, if you take to watching her hair, or the way she trimmed her frock, or anything else about her, instead of watching what she is saying as if that were really what you and she are talking for. I

could name to you young women who seem to go into society for the purpose of studying the milliner's business. It is a very good business, and a very proper business to study in the right place. I know some very good girls who would be much improved, and whose husbands would be a great deal happier, if they would study it to more purpose than they do. But do not study it while you are talking. No, — not if the Empress Eugénie herself should be talking to you.* Suppose, when General Dix has presented you and mamma, the Empress should see you in the crowd afterwards, and should send that stiff-looking old gentleman in a court dress across the room, to ask you to come and talk to her, and should say to you, "Mademoiselle, est-ce que l'on permet aux jeunes filles Américaines se promener à cheval sans cavalier?" Do you look her frankly in the face while she speaks,

* This was written in 1869, and I leave it *in memoriam*. Indeed, in this May of 1871, Eugénie's chances of receiving Clare at Court again are as good as anybody's, and better than some.

and when she stops, do you answer her as you would answer Leslie Goldthwaite if you were coming home from berrying. Don't you count those pearls that the Empress has tied round her head, nor think how you can make a necktie like hers out of that old bit of ribbon that you bought in Syracuse. Tell her, in as good French or as good English as you can muster, what she asks; and if, after you have answered her lead, she plays again, do you play again; and if she plays again, do you play again, — till one or other of you takes the trick. But do you think of nothing else, while the talk goes on, but the subject she has started, and of her; do not think of yourself, but address yourself to the single business of meeting her inquiry as well as you can. Then, if it becomes proper for you to ask her a question, you may. But remember that conversation is what you are there for, — not the study of millinery, or fashion, or jewelry, or politics.

Why, I have known men who, while they were smirking, and smiling, and telling other lies to

their partners, were keeping the calendar of the whole room, — knew who was dancing with whom, and who was looking at pictures, and that Brown had sent up to the lady of the house to tell her that supper was served, and that she was just looking for her husband that he might offer Mrs. Grant his arm and take her down stairs. But do you think their partners liked to be treated so? Do you think their partners were worms, who liked to be trampled upon? Do you think they were pachydermatous coleoptera of the dor tribe, who had just fallen from red-oak trees, and did not know that they were trampled upon? You are wholly mistaken. Those partners were of flesh and blood, like you, — of the same blood with you, cousins-german of yours on the Anglo-Saxon side, — and they felt just as badly as you would feel if anybody talked to you while he was thinking of the other side of the room.

And I know a man who is, it is true, one of the most noble and unselfish of men, but who had made troops of friends long before people

had found that out. Long before he had made his present fame, he had found these troops of friends. When he was a green, uncouth, unlicked cub of a boy, like you, Stephen, he had made them. And do you ask how? He had made them by listening with all his might. Whoever sailed down on him at an evening party and engaged him — though it were the most weary of odd old ladies — was sure, while they were together, of her victim. He would look her right in the eye, would take in her every shrug and half-whisper, would enter into all her joys and terrors and hopes, would help her by his sympathy to find out what the trouble was, and, when it was his turn to answer, he would answer like her own son. Do you wonder that all the old ladies loved him? And it was no special court to old ladies. He talked so to school-boys, and to shy people who had just poked their heads out of their shells, and to all the awkward people, and to all the gay and easy people. And so he compelled them, by his magnetism, to talk so to him. That was the

way he made his first friends, — and that was the way, I think, that he deserved them.

Did you notice how badly I violated this rule when Dr. Ollapod talked to me of the Gorges land-grants, at Mrs. Pollexfen's? I got very badly punished, and I deserved what I got, for I had behaved very ill. I ought not to have known what Edmeston said, or what Will Hackmatack said. I ought to have been listening, and learning about the Lords sitting in Equity. Only the next day Dr. Ollapod left town without calling on me, he was so much displeased. And when, the next week, I was lecturing in Naguadavick, and the mayor of the town asked me a very simple question about the titles in the third range, I knew nothing about it and was disgraced. So much for being rude, and not attending to the man who was talking to me.

Now do not tell me that you cannot attend to stupid people, or long-winded people, or vulgar people. You can attend to anybody, if you will remember who he is. How do you suppose that Horace Fellthem attends to these old ladies, and

these shy boys? Why, he remembers that they are all of the blood-royal. To speak very seriously, he remembers whose children they are, — who is their Father. And that is worth remembering. It is not of much consequence, when you think of that, who made their clothes, or what sort of grammar they speak in. This rule of talk, indeed, leads to our next rule, which, as I said of the others, is as essential in conversation as it is in war, in business, in criticism, or in any other affairs of men. It is based on the principle of rightly honoring all men. For talk, it may be stated thus: —

NEVER UNDERRATE YOUR INTERLOCUTOR.

In the conceit of early life, talking to a man of thrice my age, and of immense experience, I said, a little too flippantly, "Was it not the King of Wurtemberg whose people declined a constitution when he had offered it to them?"

"Yes," said my friend, "the King told me the story himself."

Observe what a rebuke this would have been to

me, had I presumed to tell him the fact which he knew ten times as accurately as I. I was just saved from sinking into the earth by having couched my statement in the form of a question. The truth is, that we are all dealing with angels unawares, and we had best make up our minds to that, early in our interviews. One of the first of preachers once laid down the law of preaching thus: "Preach as if you were preaching to archangels." This means, "Say the very best thing you know, and never condescend to your audience." And I once heard Mr. William Hunt, who is one of the first artists, say to a class of teachers, "I shall not try to adapt myself to your various lines of teaching. I will tell you the best things I know, and you may make the adaptations." If you will boldly try the experiment of entering, with anybody you have to talk with, on the thing which at the moment interests you most, you will find out that other people's hearts are much like your heart, other people's experiences much like yours, and even, my dear Justin, that some other people know as much as you know. In short,

never talk down to people ; but talk to them from your best thought and your best feeling, without trying for it on the one hand, but without rejecting it on the other.

You will be amazed, every time you try this experiment, to find how often the man or the woman whom you first happen to speak to is the very person who can tell you just what you want to know. My friend Ingham, who is a working minister in a large town, says that when he comes from a house where everything is in a tangle, and all wrong, he knows no way of righting things but by telling the whole story, without the names, in the next house he happens to call at in his afternoon walk. He says that if the Windermeres are all in tears because little Polly lost their grandmother's miniature when she was out picking blueberries, and if he tells of their loss at the Ashteroths' where he calls next, it will be sure that the daughter of the gardener of the Ashteroths will have found the picture of the Windermeres. Remember what I have taught you, — that conversation is the provi-

dential arrangement for the relief of ignorance. Only, as in all medicine, the patient must admit that he is ill, or he can never be cured. It is only in "Patronage," — which I am so sorry you boys and girls will not read, — and in other poorer novels, that the leech cures, at a distance, patients who say they need no physician. Find out your ignorance, first; admit it frankly, second; be ready to recognize with true honor the next man you meet, third; and then, presto! — although it were needed that the floor of the parlor should open, and a little black-bearded Merlin be shot up like Jack in a box, as you saw in Humpty-Dumpty, — the right person, who knows the right thing, will appear, and your ignorance will be solved.

What happened to me last week when I was trying to find the History of Yankee Doodle? Did it come to me without my asking? Not a bit of it. Nothing that was true came without my asking. Without my asking, there came that stuff you saw in the newspapers, which said Yankee Doodle was a Spanish air. That was

not true. This was the way I found out what was true. I confessed my ignorance; and, as Lewis at Bellombre said of that ill-mannered Power, I had a great deal to confess. What I knew was, that in "American Anecdotes" an anonymous writer said a friend of his had seen the air among some Roundhead songs in the collection of a friend of his at Cheltenham, and that this air was the basis of Yankee Doodle. What was more, there was the old air printed. But then that story was good for nothing till you could prove it. A Methodist minister came to Jeremiah Mason, and said, "I have seen an angel from heaven who told me that your client was innocent." "Yes," said Mr. Mason, "and did he tell you how to prove it?" Unfortunately, in the dear old "American Anecdotes," there was not the name of any person, from one cover to the other, who would be responsible for one syllable of its charming stories. So there I was! And I went through library after library looking for that Roundhead song, and I could not find it. But when the time came that it was necessary I should know, I con-

fessed ignorance. Well, after that, the first man I spoke to said, "No, I don't know anything about it. It is not in my line. But our old friend Watson knew something about it, or said he did." "Who is Watson?" said I. "O, he 's dead ten years ago. But there 's a letter by him in the Historical Proceedings, which tells what he knew." So, indeed, there was a letter by Watson. Oddly enough it left out all that was of direct importance; but it left in this statement, that he, an authentic person, wrote the dear old "American Anecdote" story. That was something. So then I gratefully confessed ignorance again, and again, and again. And I have many friends, so that there were many brave men, and many fair women, who were extending the various tentacula of their feeling processes into the different realms of the known and the unknown, to find that lost scrap of a Roundhead song for me. And so, at last, it was a girl — as old, say, as the youngest who will struggle as far as this page in the Cleveland High School — who said, "Why, there is something about it in that funny English book,

'Gleanings for the Curious,' I found in the Boston Library." And sure enough, in an article perfectly worthless in itself, there were the two words which named the printed collection of music which the other people had forgotten to name. These three books were each useless alone; but, when brought together, they established a fact. It took three people in talk to bring the three books together. And if I had been such a fool that I could not confess ignorance, or such another fool as to have distrusted the people I met with, I should never have had the pleasure of my discovery.

Now I must not go into any more such stories as this, because you will say I am violating the sixth great rule of talk, which is

BE SHORT.

And, besides, you must know that "they say" (whoever *they* may be) that "young folks" like you skip such explanations, and hurry on to the stories. I do not believe a word of that, but I obey.

I know one Saint. We will call her Agatha. I used to think she could be painted for Mary Mother, her face is so passionless and pure and good. I used to want to make her wrap a blue cloth round her head, as if she were in a picture I have a print of, and then, if we could only find the painter who was as pure and good as she, she should be painted as Mary Mother. Well, this sweet Saint has done lovely things in life, and will do more, till she dies. And the people she deals with do many more than she. For her truth and gentleness and loveliness pass into them, and inspire them, and then, with the light and life they gain from her, they can do what, with her light and life, she cannot do. For she herself, like all of us, has her limitations. And I suppose the one reason why, with such serenity and energy and long-suffering and unselfishness as hers, she does not succeed better in her own person is that she does not know how to "be short." We cannot all be or do all things. First boy in Latin, you may translate that sentence back into Latin, and see how much better it sounds there than in English. Then send your version to the Letter-Box.

For instance, it may be Agatha's duty to come and tell me that — what shall we have it? — say that dinner is ready. Now really the best way but one to say that is, "Dinner is ready, sir." The best way is, "Dinner, sir"; for this age, observe, loves to omit the verb. Let it. But really if St. Agatha, of whom I speak, — the second of that name, and of the Protestant, not the Roman Canon, — had this to say, she would say: "I am so glad to see you! I do not want to take your time, I am sure, you have so many things to do, and you are so good to everybody, but I knew you would let me tell you this. I was coming up stairs, and I saw your cook, Florence, you know. I always knew her; she used to live at Mrs. Cradock's before she started on her journey; and her sister lived with that friend of mine that I visited the summer Willie was so sick with the mumps, and she was so kind to him. She was a beautiful woman; her husband would be away all the day, and, when he came home, she would have a piece of mince-pie for him, and his slippers warmed and in front of the fire for him; and, when he was in

Cayenne, he died, and they brought his body home in a ship Frederic Marsters was the captain of. It was there that I met Florence's sister, — not so pretty as Florence, but I think a nice girl. She is married now and lives at Ashland, and has two nice children, a boy and a girl. They are all coming to see us at Thanksgiving. I was so glad to see that Florence was with you, and I did not know it when I came in, and when I met her in the entry I was very much surprised, and she saw I was coming in here, and she said, 'Please, will you tell him that dinner is ready?'"

Now it is not simply, you see, that, while an announcement of that nature goes on, the mutton grows cold, your wife grows tired, the children grow cross, and that the subjugation of the world in general is set back, so far as you are all concerned, a perceptible space of time on The Great Dial. But the tale itself has a wearing and wearying perplexity about it. At the end you doubt if it is your dinner that is ready, or Fred Marsters's, or Florence's, or nobody's. Whether there is any real dinner, you doubt. For want of a vigorous

nominative case, firmly governing the verb, whether that verb is seen or not, or because this firm nominative is masked and disguised behind clouds of drapery and other rubbish, the best of stories, thus told, loses all life, interest, and power.

Leave out then, resolutely. First omit "Speaking of hides," or "That reminds me of," or "What you say suggests," or "You make me think of," or any such introductions. Of course you remember what you are saying. You could not say it if you did not remember it. It is to be hoped, too, that you are thinking of what you are saying. If you are not, you will not help the matter by saying you are, no matter if the conversation do have firm and sharp edges. Conversation is not an essay. It has a right to many large letters, and many new paragraphs. That is what makes it so much more interesting than long, close paragraphs like this, which the printers hate as much as I do, and which they call "*solid matter*," as if to indicate that, in proportion, such paragraphs are apt to lack the light, ethereal spirit of all life.

Second, in conversation, you need not give au-

thorities, if it be only clear that you are not pretending originality. Do not say, as dear Pemberton used to, "I have a book at home, which I bought at the sale of Byles's books, in which there is an account of Parry's first voyage, and an explanation of the red snow, which shows that the red snow is," &c., &c., &c. Instead of this say, "Red snow is," &c., &c., &c. Nobody will think you are producing this as a discovery of your own. When the authority is asked for, there will be a fit time for you to tell.

Third, never explain, unless for extreme necessity, who people are. Let them come in as they do at the play, when you have no play-bill. If what you say is otherwise intelligible, the hearers will find out, *if it is necessary*, as perhaps it may not be. Go back, if you please, to my account of Agatha, and see how much sooner we should all have come to dinner if she had not tried to explain about all these people. The truth is, you cannot explain about them. You are led in farther and farther. Frank wants to say, "George went to the Stereopticon yesterday." Instead of that he

says, "A fellow at our school named George, a brother of Tom Tileston who goes to the Dwight, and is in Miss Somerby's room, — not the Miss Somerby that has the class in the Sunday school, — she 's at the Brimmer School, — but her sister," — and already poor Frank is far from George, and far from the Stereopticon, and, as I observe, is wandering farther and farther. He began with George, but, George having suggested Tom and Miss Somerby, by the same law of thought each of them would have suggested two others. Poor Frank, who was quite master of his one theme, George, finds unawares that he is dealing with two, gets flurried, but plunges on, only to find, in his remembering, that these two have doubled into four, and then, conscious that in an instant they will be eight, and, which is worse, eight themes or subjects on which he is not prepared to speak at all, probably wishes he had never begun. It is certain that every one else wishes it, whether he does or not. You need not explain. People of sense understand something.

Do you remember the illustration of repartee in Miss Edgeworth? It is this: —

Mr. Pope, who was crooked and cross, was talking with a young officer. The officer said he thought that in a certain sentence an interrogation-mark was needed.

"Do you know what an interrogation-mark is?" snarled out the crooked, cross little man.

"It is a crooked little thing that asks questions," said the young man.

And he shut up Mr. Pope for that day.

But you can see that he would not have shut up Mr. Pope at all if he had had to introduce his answer and explain it from point to point. If he had said, "Do you really suppose I do not know? Why, really, as long ago as when I was at the Charter House School, old William Watrous, who was master there then, — he had been at the school himself, when he and Ezekiel Cheever were boys, — told me that a point of interrogation was a little crooked thing that asks questions."

The repartee would have lost a good deal of its force, if this unknown young officer had not learned, 1, not to introduce his remarks; 2, not to give authorities; and 3, not to explain who people

are. These are, perhaps, enough instances in detail, though they do not in the least describe all the dangers that surround you. Speaking more generally, avoid parentheses as you would poison; and more generally yet, as I said at first, BE SHORT.

These six rules must suffice for the present. Observe, I am only speaking of methods. I take it for granted that you are not spiteful, hateful, or wicked otherwise. I do not tell you, therefore, never to talk scandal, because I hope you do not need to learn that. I do not tell you never to be sly, or mean, in talk. If you need to be told that, you are beyond such training as we can give here. Study well, and practise daily these six rules, and then you will be prepared for our next instructions, — which require attention to these rules, as all Life does, — when we shall consider

HOW TO WRITE.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW TO WRITE.

IT is supposed that you have learned your letters, and how to make them. It is supposed that you have written the school copies, from

Apes and Amazons aim at Art.

down to

Zanies and Zodiacs are the zest of Zoroaster.

It is supposed that you can mind your p's and q's, and, as Harriet Byron said of Charles Grandison, in the romance which your great-grandmother knew by heart, "that you can spell well." Observe the advance of the times, dear Stephen. That a gentleman should spell well was the only literary requisition which the accomplished lady of his love made upon him a

hundred years ago. And you, if you go to Mrs. Vandermeyer's party to-night, will be asked by the fair Marcia, what is your opinion as to the origin of the Myth of Ceres!

These things are supposed. It is also supposed that you have, at heart and in practice, the essential rules which have been unfolded in Chapters II. and III. As has been already said, these are as necessary in one duty of life as in another, — in writing a President's message as in finding your way by a spotted trail, from Albany to Tamworth.

These things being supposed, we will now consider the special needs for writing, as a gentleman writes, or a lady, in the English language, which is, fortunately for us, the best language of them all.

I will tell you, first, the first lesson I learned about it; for it was the best, and was central. My first undertaking of importance in this line was made when I was seven years old. There was a new theatre, and a prize of a hundred dollars was offered for an ode to be recited at

the opening, — or perhaps it was only at the opening of the season. Our school was hard by the theatre, and as we boys were generally short of spending-money, we conceived the idea of competing for this prize. You can see that a hundred dollars would have gone a good way in barley-candy and blood-alleys, — which last are things unknown, perhaps, to Young America to-day. So we resolutely addressed ourselves to writing for the ode. I was soon snagged, and found the difficulties greater than I had thought. I consulted one who has through life been Nestor and Mentor to me, — (Second class in Greek, — Wilkins, who was Nestor? — Right; go up. Third class in French, — Miss Clara, who was Mentor? — Right; sit down), — and he replied by this remark, which I beg you to ponder inwardly, and always act upon: —

"Edward," said he, "whenever I am going to write anything, I find it best to think first what I am going to say."

In the instruction thus conveyed is a lesson which nine writers out of ten have never learned.

Even the people who write leading articles for the newspapers do not, half the time, know what they are going to say when they begin. And I have heard many a sermon which was evidently written by a man who, when he began, only knew what his first "head" was to be. The sermon was a sort of riddle to himself, when he started, and he was curious as to how it would come out. I remember a very worthy gentleman who sometimes spoke to the Sunday school when I was a boy. He would begin without the slightest idea of what he was going to say, but he was sure that the end of the first sentence would help him to the second. This is an example.

"My dear young friends, I do not know that I have anything to say to you, but I am very much obliged to your teachers for asking me to address you this beautiful morning. — The morning is so beautiful after the refreshment of the night, that as I walked to church, and looked around and breathed the fresh air, I felt more than ever what a privilege it is to live in

so wonderful a world. — For the world, dear children, has been all contrived and set in order for us by a Power so much higher than our own, that we might enjoy our own lives, and live for the happiness and good of our brothers and our sisters. — Our brothers and our sisters they are indeed, though some of them are in distant lands, and beneath other skies, and parted from us by the broad oceans. — These oceans, indeed, do not so much divide the world as they unite it. They make it one. The winds which blow over them, and the currents which move their waters, — all are ruled by a higher law, that they may contribute to commerce and to the good of man. — And man, my dear children," &c., &c., &c.

You see there is no end to it. It is a sort of capping verses with yourself, where you take up the last word, or the last idea of one sentence, and begin the next with it, quite indifferent where you come out, if you only "occupy the time" that is appointed. It is very easy for you, but, my dear friends, it is very hard for those who read and who listen!

The vice goes so far, indeed, that you may divide literature into two great classes of books. The smaller class of the two consists of the books written by people who had something to say. They had in life learned something, or seen something, or done something, which they really wanted and needed to tell to other people. They told it. And their writings make, perhaps, a twentieth part of the printed literature of the world. It is the part which contains all that is worth reading. The other nineteen-twentieths make up the other class. The people have written just as you wrote at school when Miss Winstanley told you to bring in your compositions on "Duty Performed." You had very little to say about "Duty Performed." But Miss Winstanley expected three pages. And she got them, — such as they were.

Our first rule is, then,

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.

The second rule is,

SAY IT.

That is, do not begin by saying something else,

which you think will lead up to what you want to say. I remember, when they tried to teach me to sing, they told me to "think of eight and sing seven." That may be a very good rule for singing, but it is not a good rule for talking, or writing, or any of the other things that I have to do. I advise you to say the thing you want to say. When I began to preach, another of my Nestors said to me, "Edward, I give you one piece of advice. When you have written your sermon, leave off the introduction and leave off the conclusion. The introduction seems to me always written to show that the minister can preach two sermons on one text. Leave that off, then, and it will do for another Sunday. The conclusion is written to apply to the congregation the doctrine of the sermon. But, if your hearers are such fools that they cannot apply the doctrine to themselves, nothing you can say will help them." In this advice was much wisdom. It consists, you see, in advising to begin at the beginning, and to stop when you have done.

Thirdly, and always,

USE YOUR OWN LANGUAGE.

I mean the language you are accustomed to use in daily life. David did much better with his sling than he would have done with Saul's sword and spear. And Hatty Fielding told me, only last week, that she was very sorry she wore her cousin's pretty brooch to an evening dance, though Fanny had really forced it on her. Hatty said, like a sensible girl as she is, that it made her nervous all the time. She felt as if she were sailing under false colors. If your every-day language is not fit for a letter or for print, it is not fit for talk. And if, by any series of joking or fun, at school or at home, you have got into the habit of using slang in talk, which is not fit for print, why, the sooner you get out of it the better. Remember that the very highest compliment paid to anything printed is paid when a person, hearing it read aloud, thinks it is the remark of the reader made in conversation. Both writer and reader then receive the highest possible praise.

It is sad enough to see how often this rule is violated. There are fashions of writing. Mr. Dickens, in his wonderful use of exaggerated lan-

guage, introduced one. And now you can hardly read the court report in a village paper but you find that the ill-bred boy who makes up what he calls its "locals" thinks it is funny to write in such a style as this: —

"An unfortunate individual who answered to the somewhat well-worn sobriquet of Jones, and appeared to have been trying some experiments as to the comparative density of his own skull and the materials of the sidewalk, made an involuntary appearance before Mr. Justice Smith."

Now the little fool who writes this does not think of imitating Dickens. He is only imitating another fool, who was imitating another, who was imitating another, — who, through a score of such imitations, got the idea of this burlesque exaggeration from some of Mr. Dickens's earlier writings of thirty years ago. It was very funny when Mr. Dickens originated it. And almost always, when he used it, it was very funny. But it is not in the least funny when these other people use it, to whom it is not natural, and to whom it does not come easily. Just as this boy says "sobri-

quet," without knowing at all what the word means, merely because he has read it in another newspaper, everybody, in this vein, gets entrapped into using words with the wrong senses, in the wrong places, and making himself ridiculous.

Now it happens, by good luck, that I have, on the table here, a pretty file of eleven compositions, which Miss Winstanley has sent me, which the girls in her first class wrote, on the subject I have already named. The whole subject, as she gave it out, was, "Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul." I think, myself, that the subject was a hard one, and that Miss Winstanley would have done better had she given them a choice from two familiar subjects, of which they had lately seen something or read something. When young people have to do a thing, it always helps them to give them a choice between two ways of doing it. However, Miss Winstanley gave them this subject. It made a good deal of growling in the school, but, when the time came, of course the girls buckled down to the work, and, as I said before, the three

pages wrote themselves, or were written somehow or other.

Now I am not going to inflict on you all these eleven compositions. But there are three of them which, as it happens, illustrate quite distinctly the three errors against which I have been warning you. I will copy a little scrap from each of them. First, here is Pauline's. She wrote without any idea, when she began, of what she was going to say.

"*Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul.*

"A great many people ask the question, 'What is duty?' and there has been a great deal written upon the subject, and many opinions have been expressed in a variety of ways. People have different ideas upon it, and some of them think one thing and some another. And some have very strong views, and very decided about it. But these are not always to be the most admired, for often those who are so loud about a thing are not the ones who know the most upon a subject. Yet it is all very important, and many things should be done; and, when they are done, we are all embowered in ecstasy."

That is enough of poor Pauline's. And, to tell the truth, she was as much ashamed when she had come out to this "ecstasy," in first writing what she called "the plaguy thing," as she is now she reads it from the print. But she began that sentence, just as she began the whole, with no idea how it was to end. Then she got aground. She had said, "it is all very important"; and she did not know that it was better to stop there, if she had nothing else to say, so, after waiting a good while, knowing that they must all go to bed at nine, she added, "and many things should be done." Even then, she did not see that the best thing she could do was to put a full stop to the sentence. She watched the other girls, who were going well down their second pages, while she had not turned the leaf, and so, in real agony, she added this absurd "when they are done, we are all embowered in ecstasy." The next morning they had to copy the "compositions." She knew what stuff this was, just as well as you and I do, but it took up twenty good lines, and she could not afford, she thought, to leave it out.

Indeed, I am sorry to say, none of her "composition" was any better. She did not know what she wanted to say, when she had done, any better than when she began.

Pauline is the same Pauline who wanted to draw in monochromatic drawing.

Here is the beginning of Sybil's. She is the girl who refused the sponge-cake when Dr. Throop offered it to her. She had an idea that an introduction helped along, — and this is her introduction.

"*Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul.*

"I went out at sunset to consider this subject, and beheld how the departing orb was scattering his beams over the mountains. Every blade of grass was gathering in some rays of beauty, every tree was glittering in the majesty of parting day.

"I said, 'What is life? — What is duty?' I saw the world folding itself up to rest. The little flowers, the tired sheep, were turning to their fold. So the sun went down. He had done his duty, along with the rest."

And so we got round to "Duty performed," and, the introduction well over, like the tuning of an orchestra, the business of the piece began. That little slip about the flowers going into their folds was one which Sybil afterwards defended. She said it meant that they folded themselves up. But it was an oversight when she wrote it; she forgot the flowers, and was thinking of the sheep.

Now I think you will all agree with me that the whole composition would have been better without this introduction.

Sarah Clavers had a genuine idea, which she had explained to the other girls much in this way. "I know what Miss Winstanley means. She means this. When you have had a real hard time to do what you know you ought to do, when you have made a good deal of fuss about it, — as we all did the day we had to go over to Mr. Ingham's and beg pardon for disturbing the Sunday school, — you are so glad it is done, that everything seems nice and quiet and peaceful, —

just as when a thunder-storm is really over, only just a few drops falling, there comes a nice still minute or two with a rainbow across the sky. That 's what Miss Winstanley means, and that 's what I am going to say."

Now really, if Sarah had said that, without making the sentence breathlessly long, it would have been a very decent "composition" for such a subject. But when poor Sarah got her paper before her, she made two mistakes. First, she thought her school-girl talk was not good enough to be written down. And, second, she knew that long words took up more room than short; so, to fill up her three pages, she translated her little words into the largest she could think of. It was just as Dr. Schweigenthal, when he wanted to say "Jesus was going to Jerusalem," said, "The Founder of our religion was proceeding to the metropolis of his country." That took three times as much room and time, you see. So Sarah translated her English into the language of the Talkee-talkees; thus: —

"*Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul.*

"It is frequently observed, that the complete discharge of the obligations pressing upon us as moral agents is attended with conflict and difficulty. Frequently, therefore, we address ourselves to the discharge of these obligations with some measure of resistance, perhaps with obstinacy, and I may add, indeed, with unwillingness. I wish I could persuade myself that our teacher had forgotten" (Sarah looked on this as a masterpiece, — a good line of print, which says, as you see, really nothing) "the afternoon which was so mortifying to all who were concerned, when her appeal to our better selves, and to our educated consciousness of what was due to a clergyman, and to the institutions of religion, made it necessary for several of the young ladies to cross to the village," (Sarah wished she could have said metropolis,) "and obtain an interview with the Rev. Mr. Ingham."

And so the composition goes on. Four full pages there are; but you see how they were gained, — by a vicious style, wholly false to a frank-spoken girl like Sarah. She expanded

into what fills sixteen lines on this page what, as she expressed it in conversation, fills only seven.

I hope you all see how one of these faults brings on another. Such is the way with all faults; they hunt in couples, or often, indeed, in larger company. The moment you leave the simple wish to say upon paper the thing you have thought, you are given over to all these temptations, to write things which, if any one else wrote them, you would say were absurd, as you say these school-girls' "compositions" are. Here is a good rule of the real "Nestor" of our time. He is a great preacher; and one day he was speaking of the advantage of sometimes preaching an old sermon a second time. "You can change the arrangement," he said. "You can fill in any point in the argument, where you see it is not as strong as you proposed. You can add an illustration, if your statement is difficult to understand. Above all, you can

"LEAVE OUT ALL THE FINE PASSAGES."

I put that in small capitals, for one of our rules. For, in nineteen cases out of twenty, the Fine Passage that you are so pleased with, when you first write it, is better out of sight than in. Remember Whately's great maxim, "Nobody knows what good things you leave out."

Indeed, to the older of the young friends who favor me by reading these pages I can give no better advice, by the way, than that they read "Whately's Rhetoric." Read ten pages a day, then turn back, and read them carefully again, before you put the book by. You will find it a very pleasant book, and it will give you a great many hints for clear and simple expression, which you are not so likely to find in any other way I know.

Most of you know the difference between Saxon words and Latin words in the English language. You know there were once two languages in England, — the Norman French, which William the Conqueror and his men brought in, and the Saxon of the people who were conquered at that time. The Norman French was largely composed of

words of Latin origin. The English language has been made up of the slow mixture of these two; but the real stock, out of which this delicious soup is made, is the Saxon, — the Norman French should only add the flavor. In some writing, it is often necessary to use the words of Latin origin. Thus, in most scientific writing, the Latin words more nicely express the details of the meaning needed. But, to use the Latin word where you have a good Saxon one is still what it was in the times of Wamba and of Cedric, — it is to pretend you are one of the conquering nobility, when, in fact, you are one of the free people, who speak, and should be proud to speak, not the French, but the English tongue. To those of you who have even a slight knowledge of French or Latin it will be very good fun, and a very good exercise, to translate, in some thoroughly bad author, his Latin words into English.

To younger writers, or to those who know only English, this may seem too hard a task. It will be doing much the same thing, if they will try translating from long words into short ones.

Here is a piece of weak English. It is not bad in other regards, but simply weak.

"Entertaining unlimited confidence in your intelligent and patriotic devotion to the public interest, and being conscious of no motives on my part which are not inseparable from the honor and advancement of my country, I hope it may be my privilege to deserve and secure, not only your cordial co-operation in great public measures, but also those relations of mutual confidence and regard which it is always so desirable to cultivate between members of co-ordinate branches of the government." *

Take that for an exercise in translating into shorter words. Strike out the unnecessary words, and see if it does not come out stronger. The same passage will serve also as an exercise as to the use of Latin and Saxon words. Dr. Johnson is generally quoted as the English author who uses most Latin words. He uses, I think, ten in a hundred. But our Congressmen far exceed

* From Mr. Franklin Pierce's first message to Congress as President of the United States.

him. This sentence uses Latin words at the rate of thirty-five in a hundred. Try a good many experiments in translating from long to short, and you will be sure that, when you have a fair choice between two words,

A SHORT WORD IS BETTER THAN A LONG ONE.

For instance, I think this sentence would have been better if it had been couched in thirty-six words instead of eighty-one. I think we should have lost nothing of the author's meaning if he had said, "I have full trust in you. I am sure that I seek only the honor and advance of the country. I hope, therefore, that I may earn your respect and regard, while we heartily work together."

I am fond of telling the story of the words which a distinguished friend of mine used in accepting a hard post of duty. He said: —

"I do not think I am fit for this place. But my friends say I am, and I trust them. I shall take the place, and, when I am in it, I shall do as well as I can."

It is a very grand sentence. Observe that it has not one word which is more than one syllable. As it happens, also, every word is Saxon, — there is not one spurt of Latin. Yet this was a learned man, who, if he chose, could have said the whole in Latin. But he was one American gentleman talking to another American gentleman, and therefore he chose to use the tongue to which they both were born.

We have not space to go into the theory of these rules, as far as I should like to. But you see the force which a short word has, if you can use it, instead of a long one. If you want to say "hush," "hush" is a much better word than the French "*taisez-vous.*" If you want to say "halt," "halt" is much better than the French "*arretez-vous.*" The French have, in fact, borrowed "*halte*" from us or from the German, for their tactics. For the same reason, you want to prune out the unnecessary words from your sentences, and even the classes of words which seem put in to fill up. If, for instance, you can express your idea without an adjective, your sentence is

stronger and more manly. It is better to say "a saint" than "a saintly man." It is better to say "This is the truth" than "This is the truthful result." Of course an adjective may be absolutely necessary. But you may often detect extempore speakers in piling in adjectives, because they have not yet hit on the right noun. In writing, this is not to be excused. "You have all the time there is," when you write, and you do better to sink a minute in thinking for one right word, than to put in two in its place, — because you can do so without loss of time. I hope every school-girl knows, what I am sure every school-boy knows, Sheridan's saying, that "Easy writing is hard reading."

In general, as I said before, other things being equal,

"THE FEWER WORDS, THE BETTER,"

"as it seems to me." "As it seems to me" is the quiet way in which Nestor states things. Would we were all as careful!

There is one adverb or adjective which it is almost always safe to leave out in America. It

is the word "very." I learned that from one of the masters of English style. "Strike out your 'verys,'" said he to me, when I was young. I wish I had done so oftener than I have.

For myself, I like short sentences. This is, perhaps, because I have read a good deal of modern French, and I think the French gain in clearness by the shortness of their sentences. But there are great masters of style, — great enough to handle long sentences well, — and these men would not agree with me. But I will tell you this, that if you have a sentence which you do not like, the best experiment to try on it is the experiment Medea tried on the old goat, when she wanted to make him over: —

Cut it to Pieces.

What shall I take for illustration? You will be more interested in one of these school-girls' themes than in an old Congress speech I have here marked for copying. Here is the first draft of Laura Walter's composition, which happens to be tied up in the same red ribbon with the finished

exercises. I will copy a piece of that, and then you shall see, from the corrected "composition," what came of it, when she cut it to pieces, and applied the other rules which we have been studying.

LAURA'S FIRST DRAFT.

"*Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul.*

"I cannot conceive, and therefore I cannot attempt adequately to consider, the full probable meaning of the metaphorical expression with which the present 'subject' concludes, — nor do I suppose it is absolutely necessary that I should do so, for expressing the various impressions which I have formed on the subject taken as a whole, which have occurred to me in such careful meditation as I have been able to give to it, — in natural connection with an affecting little incident, which I will now, so far as my limited space will permit, proceed, however inadequately, to describe.

"My dear little brother Frankie — as sweet a little fellow as ever plagued his sister's life out, or troubled the kindest of mothers in her daily duties — was one day returning from school, when he met my father hurrying from his office, and

was directed by him to proceed as quickly as was possible to the post-office, and make inquiry there for a letter of a good deal of importance which he had reason to expect, or at the least to hope for, by the New York mail."

Laura had come as far as this early in the week, when bedtime came. The next day she read it all, and saw it was sad stuff, and she frankly asked herself why. The answer was, that she had really been trying to spin out three pages. "Now," said Laura to herself, "that is not fair." And she finished the piece in a very different way, as you shall see. Then she went back over this introduction, and struck out the fine passages. Then she struck out the long words, and put in short ones. Then she saw she could do better yet, — and she cut that long introductory sentence to pieces. Then she saw that none of it was strictly necessary, if she only explained why she gave up the rainbow part. And, after all these reductions, the first part of the essay which I have copied was cut down and changed so that it read thus: —

"*Duty performed is a Rainbow in the Soul.*

"I do not know what is meant by a Rainbow in the Soul."

Then Laura went on thus: —

"I will try to tell a story of duty performed. My brother Frank was sent to the post-office for a letter. When he came there, the poor child found a big dog at the door of the office, and was afraid to go in. It was just the dead part of the day in a country village, when even the shops are locked up for an hour, and Frank, who is very shy, saw no one whom he could call upon. He tried to make Miss Evarts, the post-office clerk, hear; but she was in the back of the office. Frank was frightened, but he meant to do his duty. So he crossed the bridge, walked up to the butcher's shop in the other village, — which he knew was open, — spent two pennies for a bit of meat, and carried it back to tempt his enemy. He waved it in the air, called the dog, and threw it into the street. The dog was much more willing to eat the meat than to eat Frankie. He left his post. Frank went in and tapped on the glass, and Miss Evarts came and gave him the letter. Frank came home in triumph, and papa said it was a finer piece of duty performed than

the celebrated sacrifice of Casabianca's would have been, had it happened that Casabianca ever made it."

That is the shortest of these "compositions." It is much the best. Miss Winstanley took the occasion to tell the girls, that, other things being equal, a short "composition" is better than a long one. A short "composition" which shows thought and care, is much better than a long one which "writes itself."

I dislike the word "composition," but I use it, because it is familiar. I think "essay" or "piece" or even "theme" a better word.

Will you go over Laura's story and see where it could be shortened, and what Latin words could be changed for better Saxon ones?

Will you take care, in writing yourself, never to say "commence" or "presume"?

In the next chapter we will ask each other

HOW TO READ.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO READ.

I. — *The Choice of Books.*

YOU are not to expect any stories this time. There will be very few words about Stephen, or Sybil, or Sarah. My business now is rather to answer, as well as I can, such questions as young people ask who are beginning to have their time at their own command, and can make their own selection of the books they are to read. I have before me, as I write, a handful of letters which have been written to the office of "The Young Folks," asking such questions. And all my intelligent young friends are asking each other such questions, and so ask them of me every day. I shall answer these questions by laying down some general rules, just as I have done before but I shall try to put you into the way of choosing your own books, rather than choosing for you a long, defined list of them.

I believe very thoroughly in courses of reading, because I believe in having one book lead to another. But, after the beginning, these courses for different persons will vary very much from each other. You all go out to a great picnic, and meet together in some pleasant place in the woods, and you put down the baskets there, and leave the pail with the ice in the shadiest place you can find, and cover it up with the blanket. Then you all set out in this great forest, which we call Literature. But it is only a few of the party, who choose to start hand in hand along a gravel-path there is, which leads straight to the Burgesses' well, and probably those few enjoy less and gain less from the day's excursion than any of the rest. The rest break up into different knots, and go some here and some there, as their occasion and their genius call them. Some go after flowers, some after berries, some after butterflies; some knock the rocks to pieces, some get up where there is a fine view, some sit down and copy the stumps, some go into water, some make a fire, some find a camp of Indians and learn how to

make baskets. Then they all come back to the picnic in good spirits and with good appetites, each eager to tell the others what he has seen and heard, each having satisfied his own taste and genius, and each and all having made vastly more out of the day than if they had all held to the gravel-path and walked in column to the Burgesses' well and back again.

This, you see, is a long parable for the purpose of making you remember that there are but few books which it is necessary for every intelligent boy and girl, man and woman, to have read. Of those few, I had as lief give the list here.

First is the Bible, of which not only is an intelligent knowledge necessary for your healthy growth in religious life, but — which is of less consequence, indeed — it is as necessary for your tolerable understanding of the literature, or even science, of a world which for eighteen centuries has been under the steady influence of the Bible. Around the English version of it, as Mr. Marsh *

* Marsh's Lectures on the English Language : very entertaining books.

shows so well, the English language of the last three centuries has revolved, as the earth revolves around the sun. He means, that although the language of one time differs from that of another, it is always at about the same distance from the language of King James's Bible.

Second, every one ought to be quite well informed as to the history of the country in which he lives. All of you should know the general history of the United States well. You should know the history of your own State in more detail, and of your own town in the most detail of all.

Third, an American needs to have a clear knowledge of the general features of the history of England.

Now it does not make so much difference how you compass this general historical knowledge, if, in its main features, you do compass it. When Mr. Lincoln went down to Norfolk to see the rebel commissioners, Mr. Hunter, on their side, cited, as a precedent for the action which he wanted the President to pursue, the negotiations between

Charles the First and his Parliament. Mr. Lincoln's eyes twinkled, and he said, "Upon questions of history I must refer you to Mr. Seward, for he is posted upon such things, and I do not profess to be. My only distinct recollection of the matter is, that Charles lost his head." Now you see it is of no sort of consequence how Mr. Lincoln got his thoroughly sound knowledge of the history of England, — in which, by the way, he was entirely at home, — and he had a perfect right to pay the compliment he did to Mr. Seward; but it was of great importance to him that he should not be haunted with the fear that the other man did know, really, of some important piece of negotiation of which he was ignorant. It was important to him to know that, so that he might be sure that his joke was — as it was — exactly the fitting answer.

Fourth, it is necessary that every intelligent American or Englishman should have read carefully most of Shakespeare's plays. Most people would have named them before the history, but I do not. I do not care, however, how early you

read them in life, and, as we shall see, they will be among your best guides for the history of England.

Lastly, it is a disgrace to read even the newspaper, without knowing where the places are which are spoken of. You need, therefore, the very best atlas you can provide yourself with. The atlas you had when you studied geography at school is better than none. But if you can compass any more precise and full, so much the better. Colton's American Atlas is good. The large cheap maps, published two on one roller by Lloyd, are good; if you can give but five dollars for your maps, perhaps this is the best investment. Mr. Fay's beautiful atlas costs but three and a half dollars. For the other hemisphere, Black's Atlas is good. Rogers's, published in Edinburgh, is very complete in its American maps. Stieler's is cheap and reliable.

When people talk of the "books which no gentleman's library should be without," the list may be boiled down, I think — if in any stress we should be reduced to the bread-and-water diet —

to such books as will cover these five fundamental necessities. If you cannot buy the Bible, the agent of the County Bible Society will give you one. You can buy the whole of Shakespeare for fifty cents in Dicks's edition. And, within two miles of the place where you live, there are books enough for all the historical study I have prescribed. So, in what I now go on to say, I shall take it for granted that we have all of us made thus much preparation, or can make it. These are the central stores of the picnic, which we can fall back upon, after our explorations in our various lines of literature.

Now for our several courses of reading. How am I to know what are your several tastes, or the several lines of your genius? Here are, as I learn from Mr. Osgood, some seventy-six thousand five hundred and forty-three Young Folks, be the same more or less, who are reading this paper. How am I to tell what are their seventy-six thousand five hundred and forty-three tastes, dispositions, or lines of genius? I cannot tell. Perhaps they could not tell themselves, not being skilled in self-

analysis; and it is by no means necessary that they should be able to tell. Perhaps we can set down on paper what will be much better, the rules or the system by which each of them may read well in the line of his own genius, and so find out before he has done with this life, what the line of that genius is, as far as there is any occasion.

Do not try to read Everything.

That is the first rule. Do not think you must be a Universal Genius. Do not "read all Reviews," as an old code I had bade young men do. And give up, as early as you can, the passion, with which all young people naturally begin, of "keeping up with the literature of the time." As for the literature of the time, if one were to adopt any extreme rule, Mr. Emerson's would be the better of the two possible extremes. He says it is wise to read no book till it has been printed a year; that, before the year is well over, many of those books drift out of sight, which just now all the newspapers are telling you to read. But

then, seriously, I do not suppose he acts on that rule himself. Nor need you and I. Only, we will not try to read them all.

Here I must warn my young friend Jamie not to go on talking about renouncing "nineteenth century trash."

It will not do to use such words about a century in which have written Goethe, Fichte, Cuvier, Schleiermacher, Martineau, Scott, Tennyson, Thackeray, Browning, and Dickens, not to mention a hundred others whom Jamie likes to read as much as I do.

No. We will trust to conversation with the others, who have had their different paths in this picnic party of ours, to learn from them just the brightest and best things that they have seen and heard. And we will try to be able to tell them, simply and truly, the best things we find on our own paths. Now, for selecting the path, what shall we do, — since one cannot in one little life attempt them all?

You can select for yourself, if you will only keep a cool head, and have your eyes open. First

of all, remember that what you want from books is the information in them, and the stimulus they give to you, and the amusement for your recreation. You do not read for the poor pleasure of saying you have read them. You are reading for the subject, much more than for the particular book, and if you find that you have exhausted all the book has on your subject, then you are to leave that book, whether you have read it through or not. In some cases you read because the author's own mind is worth knowing; and then the more you read the better you know him. But these cases do not affect the rule. You read for what is in the books, not that you may mark such a book off from a "course of reading," or say at the next meeting of the "Philogabblian Society" that you "have just been reading Kant" or "Godwin." What is the subject, then, which you want to read upon?

Half the boys and girls who read this have been so well trained that they know. They know what they want to know. One is sure that she wants to know more about Mary Queen of Scots;

another, that he wants to know more about fly-fishing; another, that she wants to know more about the Egyptian hieroglyphics; another, that he wants to know more about propagating new varieties of pansies; another, that she wants to know more about "The Ring and the Book"; another, that he wants to know more about the "Tenure of Office bill." Happy is this half. To know your ignorance is the great first step to its relief. To confess it, as has been said before, is the second. In a minute I will be ready to say what I can to this happy half; but one minute first for the less happy half, who know they want to read something because it is so nice to read a pleasant book, but who do not know what that something is. They come to us, as their ancestors came to a relative of mine who was librarian of a town library sixty years ago: "Please, sir, mother wants a sermon book, and another book."

To these undecided ones I simply say, now has the time come for decision. Your school studies have undoubtedly opened up so many subjects

to you that you very naturally find it hard to select between them. Shall you keep up your drawing, or your music, or your history, or your botany, or your chemistry? Very well in the schools, my dear Alice, to have started you in these things, but now you are coming to be a woman, it is for you to decide which shall go forward; it is not for Miss Winstanley, far less for me, who never saw your face, and know nothing of what you can or cannot do.

Now you can decide in this way. Tell me, or tell yourself, what is the passage in your reading or in your life for the last week which rests on your memory. Let us see if we thoroughly understand that passage. If we do not, we will see if we cannot learn to. That will give us a "course of reading" for the next twelve months, or if we choose, for the rest of our lives. There is no end, you will see, to a true course of reading; and, on the other hand, you may about as well begin at one place as another. Remember that you have infinite lives before you, so you need not hurry in the details for fear the work should be never done.

Now I must show you how to go to work, by supposing you have been interested in some particular passage. Let us take a passage from Macaulay, which I marked in the Edinburgh Review for Sydney to speak, twenty-nine years ago, — I think before I had ever heard Macaulay's name. A great many of you boys have spoken it at school since then, and many of you girls have heard scraps from it. It is a brilliant passage, rather too ornate for daily food, but not amiss for a luxury, more than candied orange is after a state dinner. He is speaking of the worldly wisdom and skilful human policy of the method of organization of the Roman Catholic Church. He says: —

"The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs.

That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared to the Papacy; and the Republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine; and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila.....

"She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of

a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

I. We will not begin by considering the wisdom or the mistake of the general opinion here laid down. We will begin by trying to make out what is the real meaning of the leading words employed. Look carefully along the sentence, and see if you are quite sure of what is meant by such terms as "The Roman Catholic Church," "the Pantheon," "the Flavian amphitheatre," "the Supreme Pontiffs," "the Pope who crowned Napoleon," "the Pope who crowned Pepin," "the Republic of Venice," "the missionaries who landed in Kent," "Augustine," "the Saxon had set foot in Britain," "the Frank had passed the Rhine," "Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch," "idols in Mecca," "New Zealand," "London Bridge," "St. Paul's."

For really working up a subject — and this sentence now is to be our subject — I advise a blank book, and, for my part, I like to write down the key words or questions, in a vertical

line, quite far apart from each other, on the first pages. You will see why, if you will read on.

II. Now go to work on this list. What do you really know about the organization of the Roman Catholic Church? If you find you are vague about it, that such knowledge as you have is only half knowledge, which is no knowledge, read till you are clear. Much information is not necessary, but good, as far as it goes, is necessary on any subject. This is a controverted subject. You ought to try, therefore, to read some statement by a Catholic author, and some statement by a Protestant. To find out what to read on this or any subject, there are different clews.

1. Any encyclopædia, good or bad, will set you on the trail. Most of you have or can have an encyclopædia at command. There are one-volume encyclopædias better than nothing, which are very cheap. You can pick up an edition of the old Encyclopædia Americana, in twelve volumes, for ten or twelve dollars. Or you can buy Appleton's, which is really quite good, for sixty dollars

a set. I do not mean to have you rest on any encyclopædia, but you will find one at the start an excellent guide-post. Suppose you have the old Encyclopædia Americana. You will find there that the "Roman Catholic Church" is treated by two writers, — one a Protestant, and one a Catholic. Read both, and note in your book such allusions as interest you, which you want more light upon. Do not note everything which you do not know, for then you cannot get forward. But note all that specially interests you. For instance, it seems that the Roman Catholic Church is not so called by that church itself. The officers of that church might call it the Roman church, or the Catholic church, but would not call it the Roman Catholic church. At the Congress of Vienna, Cardinal Consalvi objected to the joint use of the words Roman Catholic church. Do you know what the Congress of Vienna was? No? then make a memorandum, if you want to know. We might put in another for Cardinal Consalvi. He was a man, who had a father and mother, perhaps broth-

ers and sisters. He will give us a little human interest, if we stop to look him up. But do not stop for him now. Work through "Roman Catholic Church," and keep these memoranda in your book for another day.

2. Quite different from the encyclopædia is another book of reference, "Poole's Index." This is a general index to seventy-three magazines and reviews, which were published between the years 1802 and 1852. Now a great deal of the best work of this century has been put into such journals. A reference, then, to "Poole's Index" is a reference to some of the best separate papers on the subjects which for fifty years had most interest for the world of reading men and women. Let us try "Poole's Index" on "The Republic of Venice." There are references to articles on Venice in the New England Magazine, in the Pamphleteer, in the Monthly Review, Edinburgh, Quarterly, Westminster, and De Bow's Reviews. Copy all these references carefully, if you have any chance at any time of access to any of these journals. It is not, you know, at all necessary to

have them in the house. Probably there is some friend's collection or public library where you can find one or more of them. If you live in or near Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia, or Charleston, or New Orleans, or Cincinnati, or Chicago, or St. Louis, or Ithaca, you can find every one.

When you have carefully gone down this original list, and made your memoranda for it, you are prepared to work out these memoranda. You begin now to see how many there are. You must be guided, of course, in your reading, by the time you have, and by the opportunity for getting the books. But, aside from that, you may choose what you like best, for a beginning. To make this simple by an illustration, I will suppose you have been using the old Encyclopædia Americana, or Appleton's Cyclopædia and Poole's Index only, for your first list. As I should draw it up, it would look like this: —

CYCLOPÆDIA.	POOLE'S INDEX.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

See (for instance)	Eclectic Rev., 4th S. 13, 485.
Council of Trent.	Quart. Rev., 71, 108.
Chrysostom.	For. Quart. Rev., 27, 184.
Congress of Vienna.	Brownson's Rev., 2d S. 1, 413; 3, 309.
Cardinal Consalvi.	N. Brit. Rev., 10, 21.

THE PANTHEON.

Built by Agrippa. Consecrated, 607, to St. Mary ad Martyros. Called Rotunda.	

THE FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE.

The Coliseum, *b.* by T. Flavius Vespasian.	

SUPREME PONTIFFS.

Popes. The line begins with St. Peter, A. D. 42. Ends with Pius IX., 1846.	New-Englander, 7, 169. N. Brit. Rev., 11, 135.

POPE WHO CROWNED NAPOLEON.

Pius VII., at Notre Dame, in Paris, Dec. 2, 1804.	For. Quart. Rev., 20, 54.

POPE WHO CROWNED PEPIN.

Probably Pepin le Bref is meant. But he was not crowned by a Pope. Crowned by Archbishop Boniface of Mayence,	

at the advice of Pope Zachary. *b.* @ 715. *d.* 768.	

REPUBLIC OF VENICE.

452 to 1815. St. Real's History.	Quart. Rev. 31, 420.
Otway's Tragedy, Venice Preserved.	Month. Rev., 90, 525.
Hazlitt's Hist. of Venice.	West. Rev., 23, 38.
Ruskin's Stones of Venice.	

MISSIONARIES IN KENT.

	Dublin Univ. Mag., 21, 212.

AUGUSTINE.

There are two Augustines. This is St. Austin, *b.* in 5th century, *d.* 604–614.	
Southey's Book of Church.	
Sharon Turner's Anglo-Saxons.	
Wm. of Malmesbury.	
Bede's Ecc. History.	

SAXON IN BRITAIN.

Turner as above.	Edin. Rev., 89, 79.
Ang.-Saxon Chronicle.	Quart. Rev., 7, 92.
Six old Eng. Chronicles.	Eclect. Rev., 25, 669.

FRANK PASSED THE RHINE.

Well established on west side, at the beginning of 5th century.	For. Quart. Rev., 17, 139.

GREEK ELOQUENCE AT ANTIOCH.

Muller's Antiquitates Antiochianæ.	Greek Orators. Ed. Rev., 36, 62.

IDOLS IN MECCA.

Burckhardt's Travels.	
Burton's Travels.	

NEW ZEALAND.

3 islands, as large as Italy. Discovered, 1642; taken by Cook for England, 1769.	N. Am. Rev., 18, 328.
Gov. sent out, 1838.	West. Rev., 45, 133.
Thomson's story of N. Z.	Edin. Rev., 91, 231; 56, 333.
Cook's Voyages.	N. Brit. Rev., 16, 176.
Sir G. Gray's Poems, &c. of Maoris.	Living Age.

LONDON BRIDGE.

5 elliptical arches. "Presents an aspect unequalled for interest and animation."	

ST. PAUL'S.

Built in thirty years between 1675 and 1705, by Christ. Wren.	

Now I am by no means going to leave you to the reading of cyclopædias. The vice of cyclopædias is that they are dull. What is done for this passage of Macaulay in the lists above is only preliminary. It could be easily done in three hours' time, if you went carefully to work. And when you have done it, you have

taught yourself a good deal about your own knowledge and your own ignorance, — about what you should read and what you should not attempt. So far it fits you for selecting your own course of reading.

I have arranged this only by way of illustration. I do not mean that I think these a particularly interesting or particularly important series of subjects. I do mean, however, to show you that the moment you will sift any book or any series of subjects, you will be finding out where your ignorance is, and what you want to know.

Supposing you belong to the fortunate half of people who know what they need, I should advise you to begin in just the same way.

For instance, Walter, to whom I alluded above, wants to know about *Fly-Fishing*. This is the way his list looks.

FLY-FISHING.

CYCLOPÆDIA.	POOLE'S INDEX.
(For instance)	Quart. Rev., 69, 121 ; 37, 345.
W. Scott, Redgauntlet.	Edin. Rev., 78, 46, or 87 ; 93, 174, or 340.

Dr. Davy's Researches, 1839.	Am. Whig Rev., 6, 490.
Cuvier and Valenciennes, Hist. Naturelle des Poissons, Vol. XXI.	N. Brit. Rev., 11, 32, or 95 ; 1, 326 ; 8, 160 ; or Liv. Age, 2, 291 ; 17, 1.
	Blackwood, 51, 296.
Richardson's Fauna Bor. Amer.	Quart. Rev., 67, 98, or 332 ; 69, 226.
	Blackwood, 10, 249 ; 49, 302 ;
De Kay, Zoölogy of N. Y.	21, 815 ; 24, 248 ; 35, 775 ;
Agassiz, Lake Superior.	38, 119 ; 63, 673 ; 5, 123 ; 5, 281 ; 7, 137.
	Fraser, 42, 136.

See also,

Izaak Walton, Compleat Angler. (Walton and Cotton first appeared, 1750.)

Humphrey Day's Salmonia, or The Days of Fly-Fishing.

Blakey, History of Angling Literature.

Oppianus, De Venatione, Piscatione et Aucupio. (Halieutica translated.) Jones's English translation was published in Oxford, 1722.

Bronner, Fischergedichte und Erzählungen (Fishermen's Songs and Stories).

Norris, T., American Angler's Book.

Zouch, Life of Iz. Walton.

Salmon Fisheries. Parliamentary Reports. Annual.

"Blackwood's Magazine, an important landmark in English angling literature." See Noctes Ambrosianæ.

H. W. Beecher, N. Y. Independent, 1853.

In the New York edition of Walton and Cotton is a list of books on Angling, which Blakey enlarges. His list contains four hundred and fifty titles.

American Angler's Guide, 1849.

Storer, D. H., Fishes of Massachusetts.

Storer, D. H., Fishes of N. America.

Girard, Fresh-Water Fishes of N. America (Smithsonian Contributions, Vol. III.).

Richard Penn, Maxims and Hints for an Angler, and Miseries of Fishing, 1839.

James Wilson, The Rod and the Gun, 1840.

Herbert, Frank Forester's Fish of N. America.

Yarrel's British Fishes.

The same, on the Growth of Salmon.

Boy's Own Book.

Please to observe, now, that nobody is obliged to read up all the authorities that we have lighted on. What the lists mean is this; — that you have made the inquiry for "a sermon book and another book," and you are now thus far on your way toward an answer. These are the first answers that come to hand. Work on and you will have more. I cannot pretend to give that answer for any one of you, — far less for all those who would be likely to be interested in all the subjects which are named here. But with such clews as are given above, you will soon find your ways into the different parts that interest you of our great picnic grove.

Remember, however, that there are no royal roads. The difference between a well-educated person and one not well educated is, that the first

knows how to find what he needs, and the other does not. It is not so much that the first is better informed on details than the second, though he probably is. But his power to collect the details at short notice is vastly greater than is that of the uneducated or unlearned man.

In different homes, the resources at command are so different that I must not try to advise much as to your next step beyond the lists above. There are many good catalogues of books, with indexes to subjects. In the Congressional Library, my friend Mr. Vinton is preparing a magnificent "Index of Subjects," which will be of great use to the whole nation. In Harvard College Library they have a manuscript catalogue referring to the subjects described in the books of that collection. The "Cross-References" of the Astor Catalogue, and of the Boston Library Catalogue, are invaluable to all readers, young or old. Your teacher at school can help you in nothing more than in directing you to the books you need on any subject. Do not go and say, "Miss Winstanley, or Miss Parsons, I want a nice book"; but have

sense enough to know what you want it to be about. Be able to say, — "Miss Parsons, I should like to know about heraldry," or "about butterflies," or "about water-color painting," or "about Robert Browning," or "about the Mysteries of Udolpho." Miss Parsons will tell you what to read. And she will be very glad to tell you. Or if you are not at school, this very thing among others is what the minister is for. Do not be frightened. He will be very glad to see you. Go round to his house, not on Saturday, but at the time he receives guests, and say to him: "Mr. Ingham, we girls have made quite a collection of old porcelain, and we want to know more about it. Will you be kind enough to tell us where we can find anything about porcelain. We have read Miss Edgeworth's 'Prussian Vase' and we have read 'Palissy the Potter,' and we should like to know more about Sêvres, and Dresden, and Palissy." Ingham will be delighted, and in a fortnight, if you will go to work, you will know more about what you ask for than any one person knows in America.

And I do not mean that all your reading is to be digging or hard work. I can show that I do not, by supposing that we carry out the plan of the list above, — on any one of its details, and write down the books which that detail suggests to us. Perhaps VENICE has seemed to you the most interesting head of these which we have named. If we follow that up only in the references given above, we shall find our book list for Venice, just as it comes, in no order but that of accident, is: —

St. Real, Relation des Espagnols contre Venise.
Otway's Venice Preserved.
Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.
Howells's Venetian Life.
Blondus. De Origine Venetorum.
Muratori's Annals.
Ruskin's Stones of Venice.
D'Israeli's Contarini Fleming.
Contarina, Della Republica di Venetia.
Flagg, Venice from 1797 to 1849.
Crassus, De Republica Veneta.
Jarmot, De Republica Veneta.
Voltaire's General History.
Sismondi's History of Italy.
Lord Byron's Letters.
Sketches of Venetian History, Fam. Library, 26, 27.
Venetian History, Hazlitt.

Dandolo, G. La Caduta della Republica di Venezia (The Fall of the Republic of Venice).
Ridolfi, C., Lives of the Venetian Painters.
Monagas, J. T., Late Events in Venice.
Delavigne, Marino Faliero, a Historical Drama.
Lord Byron, The same.
Smedley's Sketches from Venetian History.
Daru, Hist. de la Republique de Venise.

So much for the way in which to choose your books. As to the choice, you will make it, not I. If you are a goose, cackling a great deal, silly at heart and wholly indifferent about to-morrow, you will choose just what you call the interesting titles. If you are a girl of sense, or a boy of sense, you will choose, when you have made your list, at least two books, determined to master them. You will choose one on the side of information, and one for the purpose of amusement, on the side of fancy. If you choose in "*Venice*" the "Merchant of Venice," you will not add to it "Venice Preserved," but you will add to it, say the Venetian chapters of "Sismondi's Italy." You will read every day; and you will divide your reading time into the two departments, — you will read for fact and you will read for fancy. Roots

must have leaves, you know, and leaves must have roots. Bodies must have spirits, and, for this world at least, spirits must have bodies. Fact must be lighted by fancy, and fancy must be balanced by fact. Making this the principle of your selection, you may, nay, you must, select for yourselves your books. And in my next chapter I will do my best to teach you

HOW TO READ THEM.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW TO READ.

II.

LISTON tells a story of a nice old lady — I think the foster-sister of the godmother of his brother-in-law's aunt — who came to make them a visit in the country. The first day after she arrived proved to be much such a day as this is, — much such a day as the first of a visit in the country is apt to be, — a heavy pelting north-easter, when it is impossible to go out, and every one is thrown on his own resources in-doors. The different ladies under Mrs. Liston's hospitable roof gathered themselves to their various occupations, and some one asked old Mrs. Dubbadoe if she would not like to read.

She said she should.

"What shall I bring you from the library?" said Miss Ellen. "Do not trouble yourself to go up stairs."

"My dear Ellen, I should like the same book I had last year when I was here. It was a very nice book, and I was very much interested in it."

"Certainly," said Miss Ellen; "what was it? I will bring it at once."

"I do not remember its name, my dear; your mother brought it to me; I think she would know."

But, unfortunately, Mrs. Liston, when applied to, had forgotten.

"Was it a novel, Mrs. Dubbadoe?"

"I can't remember that, — my memory is not as good as it was, my dear, — but it was a very interesting book."

"Do you remember whether it had plates? Was it one of the books of birds, or of natural history?"

"No, dear, I can't tell you about that. But, Ellen, you will find it, I know. The color of the cover was the color of the top of the baluster!"

So Ellen went. She has a good eye for color, and as she ran up stairs she took the shade of the baluster in her eye, matched it perfectly as she ran along the books in the library with the Russia

half-binding of the coveted volume, and brought that in triumph to Mrs. Dubbadoe. It proved to be the right book. Mrs. Dubbadoe found in it the piece of corn-colored worsted she had left for a mark the year before, so she was able to go on where she had stopped then.

Liston tells this story to trump one of mine about a schoolmate of ours, who was explaining to me about his theological studies. I asked him what he had been reading.

"O, a capital book; King lent it to me; I will ask him to lend it to you."

I said I would ask King for the book, if he would tell me who was the author.

"I do not remember his name. I had not known his name before. But that made no difference. It is a capital book. King told me I should find it so, and I did; I made a real study of it; copied a good deal from it before I returned it."

I asked whether it was a book of natural theology.

"I don't know as you would call it natural theology. Perhaps it was. You had better see

it yourself. Tell King it was the book he lent me."

I was a little persistent, and asked if it were a book of biography.

"Well, I do not know as I should say it was a book of biography. Perhaps you would say so. I do not remember that there was much biography in it. But it was an excellent book. King had read it himself, and I found it all he said it was."

I asked if it was critical, — if it explained Scripture.

"Perhaps it did. I should not like to say whether it did or not. You can find that out yourself if you read it. But it is a very interesting book and a very valuable book. King said so, and I found it was so. You had better read it, and I know King can tell you what it is."

Now in these two stories is a very good illustration of the way in which a great many people read. The notion comes into people's lives that the mere process of reading is itself virtuous. Because young men who read instead of gamble are known to be "steadier" than the gamblers, and

because children who read on Sunday make less noise and general row than those who will play tag in the neighbors' front-yards, there has grown up this notion, that to read is in itself one of the virtuous acts. Some people, if they told the truth, when counting up the seven virtues, would count them as Purity, Temperance, Meekness, Frugality, Honesty, Courage, and Reading. The consequence is that there are unnumbered people who read as Mrs. Dubbadoe did or as Lysimachus did, without the slightest knowledge of what the books have contained.

My dear Dollie, Pollie, Sallie, Marthie, or any other of my young friends whose names end in *ie*, who have favored me by reading thus far, the chances are three out of four that I could take the last novel but three that you read, change the scene from England to France, change the time from now to the seventeenth century, make the men swear by St. Denis, instead of talking modern slang, name the women Jacqueline and Marguerite, instead of Maud and Blanche, and, if Harpers would print it, as I dare say they would

if the novel was good, you would read it through without one suspicion that you had read the same book before.

So you see that it is not certain that you know how to read, even if you took the highest prize for reading in the Amplian class of Ingham University at the last exhibition. You may pronounce all the words well, and have all the rising inflections right, and none of the falling ones wrong, and yet not know how to read so that your reading shall be of any permanent use to you.

For what is the use of reading if you forget it all the next day?

"But, my dear Mr. Hale," says as good a girl as Laura, "how am I going to help myself? What I remember I remember, and what I do not remember I do not. I should be very glad to remember all the books I have read, and all that is in them; but if I can't, I can't, and there is the end of it."

No! my dear Laura, that is not the end of it. And that is the reason this paper is written. A child of God can, before the end comes, do anything she chooses to, with such help as he is

willing to give her; and he has been kind enough so to make and so to train you that you can train your memory to remember and to recall the useful or the pleasant things you meet in your reading. Do you know, Laura, that I have here a note you wrote when you were eight years old? It is as badly written as any note I ever saw. There are also twenty words in it spelled wrong. Suppose you had said then, "If I can't, I can't, and there 's an end of it." You never would have written me in the lady-like, manly handwriting you write in to-day, spelling rightly as a matter of mere feeling and of course, so that you are annoyed now that I should say that every word is spelled correctly. Will you think, dear Laura, what a tremendous strain on memory is involved in all this? Will you remember that you and Miss Sears and Miss Winstanley, and your mother, most of all, have trained your memory till it can work these marvels? All you have to do now in your reading is to carry such training forward, and you can bring about such a power of classification and of retention that you shall be mistress of the

books you have read for most substantial purposes. To read with such results is reading indeed. And when I say I want to give some hints how to read, it is for reading with that view.

When Harry and Lucy were on their journey to the sea-side, they fell to discussing whether they had rather have the gift of remembering all they read, or of once knowing everything, and then taking their chances for recollecting it when they wanted it. Lucy, who had a quick memory, was willing to take her chance. But Harry, who was more methodical, hated to lose anything he had once learned, and he thought he had rather have the good fairy give him the gift of recollecting all he had once learned. For my part, I quite agree with Harry. There are a great many things that I have no desire to know. I do not want to know in what words the King of Ashantee says, "Cut off the heads of those women." I do not want to know whether a centipede really has ninety-six legs or one hundred and four. I never did know. I never shall. I have no occasion to know. And I am glad not to have my mind

lumbered up with the unnecessary information. On the other hand, that which I have once learned or read does in some way or other belong to my personal life. I am very glad if I can reproduce that in any way, and I am much obliged to anybody who will help me.

For reading, then, the first rules, I think, are: Do not read too much at a time; stop when you are tired; and, in whatever way, make some review of what you read, even as you go along.

Capel Lofft says, in quite an interesting book, which plays about the surface of things without going very deep, which he calls *Self-Formation*,* that his whole life was changed, and indeed saved, when he learned that he must turn back at the end of each sentence, ask himself what it meant, if he believed it or disbelieved it, and, so to speak, that he must pack it away as part of his mental furniture before he took in another sentence. That is just as a dentist jams one little bit of gold-foil home, and then another, and then another. He does not put one large wad on the hollow

* Self-Formation. Crosby and Nichols. Boston. 1845.

tooth, and then crowd it all in at once. Capel Lofft says that this *reflection* — going forward as a serpent does, by a series of backward bends over the line — will make a dull book entertaining, and will make the reader master of every book he reads, through all time. For my part, I think this is cutting it rather fine, this chopping the book up into separate bits. I had rather read as one of my wisest counsellors did; he read, say a page, or a paragraph of a page or two, more or less; then he would look across at the wall, and consider the author's statement, and fix it on his mind, and then read on. I do not do this, however. I read half an hour or an hour, till I am ready, perhaps, to put the book by. Then I examine myself. What has this amounted to? What does he say? What does he prove? Does he prove it? What is there new in it? Where did he get it? If it is necessary in such an examination you can go back over the passage, correct your first impression, if it is wrong, find out the meaning that the writer has carelessly concealed, and such a process makes it certain that you yourself will remember his thought or his statement.

I can remember, I think, everything I saw in Europe, which was worth seeing, if I saw it twice. But there was many a wonder which I was taken to see in the whirl of sight-seeing, of which I have no memory, and of which I cannot force any recollection. I remember that at Malines — what we call Mechlin — our train stopped nearly an hour. At the station a crowd of guides were shouting that there was time to go and see Rubens's picture of ———, at the church of ———. This seemed to us a droll contrast to the cry at our stations, "Fifteen minutes for refreshments!" It offered such æsthetic refreshment in place of carnal oysters, that purely for the frolic we went to see. We were hurried across some sort of square into the church, saw the picture, admired it, came away, and forgot it, — clear and clean forgot it! My dear Laura, I do not know what it was about any more than you do. But if I had gone to that church the next day, and had seen it again, I should have fixed it forever on my memory. Moral: Renew your acquaintance with whatever you want to remember. I think Ing-

ham says somewhere that it is the slight difference between the two stereoscopic pictures which gives to them, when one overlies the other, their relief and distinctness. If he does not say it, I will say it for him now.

I think it makes no difference how you make this mental review of the author, but I do think it essential that, as you pass from one division of his work to another, you should make it somehow.

Another good rule for memory is indispensable, I think, — namely, to read with a pencil in hand. If the book is your own, you had better make what I may call your own index to it on the hard white page which lines the cover at the end. That is, you can write down there just a hint of the things you will be apt to like to see again, noting the page on which they are. If the book is not your own, do this on a little slip of paper, which you may keep separately. These memoranda will be, of course, of all sorts of things. Thus they will be facts which you want to know, or funny stories which you think will amuse some

one, or opinions which you may have a doubt about. Suppose you had got hold of that very rare book, "Veragas's History of the Pacific Ocean and its Shores"; here might be your private index at the end of the first volume: —

Percentage of salt in water, 11: Gov. Revillagigedo, 19: Caciques and potatoes, 23: Lime water for scurvy, 29. Enata, Kanaka, *ἀνήρ*, *ἀνά*? 42: Magelhaens *vs.* Wilkes, 57: Coral insects, 72: Gigantic ferns, 84, &c., &c., &c.

Very likely you may never need one of these references; but if you do, it is certain that you will have no time to waste in hunting for them. Make your memorandum, and you are sure.

Bear in mind all along that each book will suggest other books which you are to read sooner or later. In your memoranda note with care the authors who are referred to of whom you know little or nothing, if you think you should like to know more, or ought to know more. Do not neglect this last condition, however. You do not make the memorandum to show it at the Philogabblian; you make it for yourself; and it means

that you yourself need this additional information.

Whether to copy much from books or not? That is a question, — and the answer is, — "That depends." If you have but few books, and much time and paper and ink; and if you are likely to have fewer books, why, nothing is nicer and better than to make for use in later life good extract-books to your own taste, and for your own purposes. But if you own your books, or are likely to have them at command, time is short, and the time spent in copying would probably be better spent in reading. There are some very diffusive books, difficult because diffusive, of which it is well to write close digests, if you are really studying them. When we read John Locke, for instance, in college, we had to make abstracts, and we used to stint ourselves to a line for one of his chatty sections. That was good practice for writing, and we remember what was in the sections to this hour. If you copy, make a first-rate index to your extracts. They sell books prepared for the purpose, but you may just as well make your own.

You see I am not contemplating any very rapid or slap-dash work. You may put that on your novels, or books of amusement, if you choose, and I will not be very cross about it; but for the books of improvement, I want you to improve by reading them. Do not "gobble" them up so that five years hence you shall not know whether you have read them or not. What I advise seems slow to you, but if you will, any of you, make or find two hours a day to read in this fashion, you will be one day accomplished men and women. Very few professional men, known to me, get so much time as that for careful and systematic reading. If any boy or girl wants really to know what comes of such reading, I wish he would read the life of my friend George Livermore, which our friend Charles Deane has just now written for the Historical Society of Massachusetts. There was a young man, who when he was a boy in a store began his systematic reading. He never left active and laborious business; but when he died, he was one of the accomplished historical scholars of America. He had no superior in his special

lines of study; he was a recognized authority and leader among men who had given their lives to scholarship.

I have not room to copy it here, but I wish any of you would turn to a letter of Frederick Robertson's, near the end of the second volume of his letters, where he speaks of this very matter. He says he read, when he was at Oxford, but sixteen books with his tutors. But he read them so that they became a part of himself, "as the iron enters a man's blood." And they were books by sixteen of the men who have been leaders of the world. No bad thing, dear Stephen, to have in your blood and brain and bone the vitalizing element that was in the lives of such men.

I need not ask you to look forward so far as to the end of a life as long as Mr. George Livermore's, and as successful. Without asking that, I will say again, what I have implied already, that any person who will take any special subject of detail, and in a well-provided library will work steadily on that little subject for a fortnight, will at the end of the fortnight probably know more of that

detail than anybody in the country knows. If you will study by subjects for the truth, you have the satisfaction of knowing that the ground is soon very nearly all your own.

I do not pretend that books are everything. I may have occasion some day to teach some of you "How to Observe," and then I shall say some very hard things about people who keep their books so close before their eyes that they cannot see God's world, nor their fellow-men and women. But books rightly used are society. Good books are the best society; better than is possible without them, in any one place, or in any one time. To know how to use them wisely and well is to know how to make Shakespeare and Milton and Theodore Hook and Thomas Hood step out from the side of your room, at your will, sit down at your fire, and talk with you for an hour. I have no such society at hand, as I write these words, except by such magic. Have you in your log-cabin in No. 7?